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THE  
GENTLE SKEPTIC;  
OR,  
ESSAYS AND CONVERSATIONS  
OF A COUNTRY JUSTICE  
ON THE  
AUTHENTICITY AND TRUTHFULNESS OF THE  
OLD TESTAMENT RECORDS.

EDITED BY THE  
REV. C. WALWORTH.

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## P R E F A C E.

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THE Editor of this book knows of no better way to explain its purpose, and at the same time to convey some inkling of the character and views of his friend, the "Country Justice," than by publishing the following letter :

"BIRDSVILLE, *March* 19, 1863.

"DEAR REV. SIR: I thank you sincerely for your kindness in revising and editing my manuscripts. The book is intended for a complete treatise on the subject, and one which may be put into the hands of any person who doubts, but is willing to examine thoroughly. I am afraid that some parts may seem too light and trifling to gentlemen of your cloth, but please remember that I do not write for such as you, although I desire your approval most heartily. It is the young men I aim at—the fresh, buoyant, intelligent, live young men of the country. They ought to belong to God's party, and I want to have them in it.

"It is high time for the friends of Revelation to be stirring, and to make common cause in its behalf. Surely

it is no time to sleep, when, to the dismay of all sincere Christians, not only avowed infidels attack it, but university professors and clergymen manifestly betray it, and, in one sad case—that of the unfortunate Colenso—an English missionary Bishop surrenders disgracefully on the field of his mission. Yet my firm persuasion is, that never did the cause of Revelation stand on better vantage ground than now, if those whose duty it is will only awake to the crisis, study well, but think more, brush off the mildew from their old books, examine thoroughly and admit frankly the real acquisitions of modern science, and show, as we can, that between its new truths and the old foundations of faith, there is no discord, but harmony.

“In fine, I throw in my contribution. *La voila!* All the strong, positive arguments for my thesis are presented, I think, albeit after a fashion of my own; and as to the objections usually urged against it, especially those originating in the scientific discoveries of the day, I have grappled with them manfully and fairly. May the practical results prove that I have done so successfully. Commending the fortunes of my little book to God, and to your kind prayers, I remain,

“Most sincerely, &c.,

“JNO. BIRD.”

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# THE GENTLE SKEPTIC.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE GENTLE SKEPTIC INTRODUCED.

"There's nothing ill should dwell in such a temple:  
If the ill-spirit have so fair a house,  
Good things will strive to dwell with it."—*Tempest.*

I AM a Justice of the Peace in an inland town of the State of New York, and my name is Jonathan Bird. I am an old bachelor, and having nothing young of my own to be fond of, I love all young people at first sight. I love young men best of all, especially when they stand straight in their shoes, and hold their heads up. I love to see modesty glowing in their faces, but I don't want to have it crook their shoulders, nor bend their heads. I have a horror of all those false virtues and graces which interfere with the natural curvature of the human spine; for, according to my faith and philosophy, even religion does men no good unless it makes them nobler and manlier. I love that young man that walked into my study one day last winter. There was just so much embarrassment and diffidence in his manner as men of sense always feel when accosting a stranger, and no more. He presented me at once his letter of introduction, which was very well

on his part, but quite unnecessary on mine, for I felt that I knew him at the first glance, like a familiar book. His table of contents was printed on his open, manly, gentle face in clear "Long Primer." The letter of introduction ran thus :

"DEAR FRIEND AND OLD CHUM: The bearer of this is a second edition—an improved one, I think—of a certain Walter Manly that you were foolish enough to love in college days, and to whom you vowed eternal friendship and correspondence the night before parting. You remember that night, I think—at the gate of the covered bridge, with the moon above for one witness, and for the other old Christopher the gatekeeper, whose bald head glistened like another moon below. Good old Dutchman! Do you remember his comment on our vows? '*Ach myn lieblings, it is goot promise, but easy vergotten.*' Sure enough, the correspondence was soon dropped, but the rest of the vow remains, I trust, unbroken. Let this copy of an old friend stay by you as much as he will, while he remains in your neighborhood, so that he may have something to tell me when he comes home again. Try to love him, if not for his own sake, for the sake of a foolish father, who remains," &c., &c.

Something like a croup rising into my throat held me silent, but I shook the young man by his two hands, over and over again, saying nothing, but trying all the while to gaze at him through the prismatic fog that glimmered between us. Then I went and poked up the fire with the tongs, though forsooth it needed no poking. Then I came back again and shook his hands once more. I might have embraced him, only I saw he was swallowing lumps like myself, and more ashamed of it than I. Then



I crowded him into a chair, and subsided into another. My impression is that after this, I talked very much like an old fool, and that he seemed very much embarrassed. At length, my good sense returning, I stopped talking, called Kitty from the kitchen, and ordered in cigars, likewise two pewter mugs and a poker. I always use the pipe—a common clay one—and light it with a hickory coal from the fireplace. Walter had the good taste to decline the cigars, and follow my example. While in his turn he was occupied with the tongs, I took occasion to scrutinize him once more. That I was beginning to make an impression was evident, and this impression deepened itself as the evening advanced. When finally I saw my young man settle back into his chair (my old leather arm chair), and put his feet upon the fender, I considered his relations with me as fixed. And I was right. It is not a long while since our first interview, and we are the same as old acquaintances. He comes in now when he likes, walks into my study without a word said, and makes himself at home. He calls me “uncle,” and my sister Becky “aunty,” as familiarly as if we had brought him up from childhood. God bless him! He is not the only young person familiar there, by any means; although he is the chief spirit that haunts the spot, *ab extra*, unless ———. But I must not say anything about Susy Brinn yet; everything in its own time.

The following conversation took place one Saturday evening at my study aforesaid.

*J. B.* Walter, where do you go to church?

*Walter.* Sometimes to one place, sir, sometimes to another.

*J. B.* Have you no religion of your own, you vagabond!

*Walter.* No, sir.

*J. B.* Are they all alike to you, then?

*Walter.* They are all alike to me.

*J. B.* Why, since they do not accord with each other, they cannot all be equally true.

*Walter.* They are all equally true to me, sir.

*J. B.* Have you never attempted, Walter, to compare them together, in order to see which bears the marks of a divine Author? Have you ever fairly tested them to see which accords best with your own conceptions of a pure and living Christianity?

*Walter.* No, sir. In truth, Uncle Bird, my difficulties lie behind Christianity, and attach to the old Jewish religion, of which Christianity, you know, is only the development.

*J. B.* Why, Christianity has distinct and sufficient proofs of its own.

*Walter.* I don't dispute it; but I prefer to begin farther back. Prove to me the Old Testament, and I believe the New, for I am satisfied that either both are false, or both are true.

*J. B.* Well, my dear boy, begin where you like, only begin, and begin at once and in earnest.

*Walter.* I am in earnest. I have never been entirely indifferent.

*J. B.* Will you read a book on the evidences of the Mosaic revelation? Will you read it thoroughly? Will you study it?

*Walter.* Yes, I will. I should prefer one that's not too dry.

*J. B.* Ah! you lazy rogue.

*Walter.* Well now, uncle, some books are too dry; and—allow me to say it—if Christian authors are inspired with a true zeal, they can afford to bait their hooks &

little for the benefit of us outsiders. Why need righteousness and truth be sleepy? Give me a book with life and sunlight in it.

*J. B.* There is some reason in what you say. It is not easy, however, to present the highest and gravest truths that concern the soul in the garb of light literature, nor do we read them to much advantage in smoking cap and slippers.

*Walter.* Well then, let us talk over the subject together. Speech is more ancient than letters, more agreeable too, and beyond all comparison more forcible. Come, my dear sir, I am really in earnest. Lay down the conditions, and let us begin.

*J. B.* It is not easy to converse soundly, at least not profoundly, on such a question. Reflection is necessary, authorities must be searched, and this requires study. But what say you to this? We will devote our Saturday nights to the business. I engage to have a few sheets of manuscript ready each week, which either you or I will read aloud, and whenever I fail, or my manuscript is too short, we will use up the time in talking.

*Walter.* With all my heart. And, I promise you, I shall not be the first to tire of the project, for I am determined to have this question settled.

*J. B.* Next Saturday night, then.

*Walter.* Next Saturday night. *Au revoir!*

My readers have now been introduced to the Gentle Skeptic who gives title to this book. I trust that he may prove to be, in his earnestness and sincerity, a type of every doubting mind among them. The following chapters will be made up mostly of the essays read in our Saturday evening reunions. There was always a good deal of conversation on these occasions, sometimes with

my young friend Walter alone, and sometimes with others who in process of time were aggregated to our circle, but I have suppressed the greater part, only reporting a few words here and there, in the hope that they may serve to elucidate the subject, or to relieve the mind by a slight diversion to less serious matters. I claim from my indulgent readers full freedom in point of method and manner; they will not find me essentially deficient in the order of my argument.

## CHAPTER II.

### GETTING UNDER WAY.

"Make me to see it, or (at the least) so prove it,  
That the probation bear no hinge nor loop  
To hang a doubt on." *Moor of Venice.*

ON the next appointed Saturday, my young friend was on hand in good time, and I saw by the first glance of his eye, that he meant business. After warming his hands for a few moments at the fire, he said, cheerfully, "It is time for this meeting to organize, and therefore, I move that Jonathan Bird, Esq., take the chair. There appears to be no opposition. Uncle Jonathan, please take this ivory-headed cane of yours, and call the house to order."

"Walter," said I, "come to order! What is the question before us to-night?"

"Why, sir, I am anxious, you know, to satisfy my mind of the authority of the Hebrew Scriptures, that is to say, of the books of the Old Testament. And you have undertaken to furnish me the proofs."

"Let us first agree upon our terms. What do you understand by the authority of the Old Testament?"

"The authority of a book I take to be the claim it has upon the confidence of an intelligent and instructed mind. I am not asking, you know, for proofs of the divinity of the Bible, but only of its authority as a reliable record of facts. This being settled, it contains

enough, as I am well aware, to explain its own character and pretensions. I wish to be satisfied that it is genuine, uncorrupted, and true."

"What do you mean, Walter, by genuine?"

"I mean authentic. Before I put faith in any book, I must have proof that it was really written by the author whose name it bears."

"And what if the book does not bear the name of any author? It is so with some well reputed works. The name of the writer may be a thing essential, or may not. We have the genuine 'letters of Junius,' but we do not know who the man was that wrote under this fictitious name. We know these to be the original letters, and are satisfied. So it is not a matter of great importance to know who wrote the book of Job. It is, however, of the highest importance to show that the five books of Moses, especially the four last, were really written by himself. I presume, I need not say why."

"No, sir; I understand you very well. The law was given by Moses, if given at all; and since these books profess to be Moses' own account of the revelation made to him, and of the establishment of the Hebrew Church, it would be a fraud if he were not the author. The Book of Job is of the nature of a sacred poem. To prove its authenticity, it is enough to show that it is the identical book which the ancient Hebrews received under that name as sacred and inspired. The name of the author, if known, would add little to its value. I amend my definition: A book is genuine if it has that origin to which it pretends."

"What kind of proof," I inquired, "do you demand, of the genuineness of the Old Testament?"

"Why, sir, the same, of course, as that by which other books are proved genuine. But I shall require that

proof to be the very strongest of its kind, for much depends upon it. It is no mere question of literature, but a life and death matter of religion. I don't wish to rest in any doubt."

"It is, indeed, a matter of life and death, Walter, and I am glad to hear you speak so earnestly. The earnest man is the only man that lives awake. The rest are mere somnambulists. And now to return to the point in hand. According to the established rules of criticism, those books are to be held as undoubtedly genuine, which have been uninterruptedly held for such from the beginning and throughout every succeeding age. It is the severest and surest rule which can be applied to any ancient book, and I presume you would not maintain that no books can be certainly genuine, but new ones."

"Of course not. We should have no history then. All would be fable in the past."

"The rule I have given constitutes the grand principle of criticism, and is so well understood, that no one who disputes it can count for anything in that science, nor, indeed, in the court of common sense. 'In what way,' demands St. Augustine, 'have men become certified that the works, so called, of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Varro, and other like authors, are really their own, except by this same continuous testimony of succeeding ages? Whence comes the proof that this belongs to one, and that to the other, except that, at the time when each one wrote, he circulated and published his works as much as he could, and thus, handed on to others and others by a constant and widely spread celebrity, they have come down to posterity, even to our times; so that when we are asked to whom each book belongs, we are at no loss for an answer.'"

"The principle is perfectly plain, Uncle Bird, and

the only reasonable one. But I shall require more ; you know, I must be assured that these books have come down to us both safe and *sound*—that they have not been corrupted with the lapse of time.”

“Certainly,” I replied ; “I must prove to you that they remain substantially in their original integrity. I say *substantially*, for there may be, and will always be, some various readings in different copies. Nothing but a continuous miracle could prevent it, and there is no necessity for such a miracle. Critical students are accustomed to find these variations in every ancient work. They are the natural wrinkles of old age, and we must not be surprised to find them in the Bible. Although the word of God, it is that word clothed in human language, and therefore subject to all the laws which govern language. The character of the contents is not changed by the careless omission or substitution, here and there, of a word in copying, or the confusion of a name or date, or the creeping in of such-like errors of little comparative importance. The essential integrity of a book remains, so long as the essential matter stands unchanged.”

“Are you not treading on unsafe ground, sir, when you admit the possibility of errors, however slight, creeping into the text of the Bible ? Do you not thereby give me a right to suspect that more essential errors may have found admission also ? What shall assure me that the inroads of time have extended only to the less important parts of the text ?”

“I have been told that the house is standing, in which your father was born, and where you yourself were born, and passed your childhood. Is it so ?”

“Yes.”

“Is it in the same state ?”



"It is; my father could not consent to see it altered any in his day. It is dear to us all by many fond recollections."

"Is there not a brick wanting, or a shingle? Is every glass, panel, and bead, every lock and hinge the same?"

"Oh! no; that is not to be expected. We have always been solicitous to keep the old place secure against innovation; but it is beyond all human vigilance to stand guard over such minutiae."

"If the hand of time has introduced changes in these things, it may also have substituted new walls in place of the old ones?"

"No, indeed; we have loved the old tenement too much, and guarded it too well for that."

"Have books no friends to love them, and watch over them? And if some unguarded hand in copying, has left out a word, which, perhaps, another ventured to restore from memory, or changed some obscure expression by an ill-judged correction or explanation, or introduced into the text a gloss from the margin, or finding numbers represented by ancient signs, has undertaken to substitute the more modern equivalent, and thus slight errors may have crept unnoticed into the text—does it follow that grosser corruptions may have taken place as easily?"

"It would not be fair to draw any such inference: certainly not while the contents of the book stand consistently together. It would be introducing universal skepticism into literature. And yet, after all, gross corruptions may occur in books."

"They may, of course. All books are not equally worth preserving; all are not equally well known, and therefore equally protected. Great revolutions in society, too, have swept away valuable books, or left us only fragments. It will be my part to show that the Old Testament Scriptures have not suffered in

this way. But you must not demand of me more than is reasonable. I cannot undertake to prove that no confusion, no errors, however unimportant, have been introduced. A careful examination demonstrates the contrary; and I am willing to admit that corruptions of the text, even of some importance, in an antiquarian point of view, have taken place, as for example, in numbers, dates, and the names of minor and less known places. But does it follow, therefore, that some careless transcriber may have introduced without detection, the pilgrimage of the Children of Israel in the desert, or the delivery of the Law to Moses, or the history, mission, and doctrine of one of the great Prophets?"

"You are right," said Walter, "I shall only ask you to prove the substantial integrity of these books."

"If any good soul loves to believe that the Divine Power has guarded every letter and syllable of the Holy Text against mutation, or mutilation, he is welcome to the innocent delusion, but the credit of the Bible must not be staked upon it. The idea is very natural to such minds as are misled by that expression—'the Word of God,' and have no other conception of it than as a supernatural chirography, confounding the revelation with the written monument of it."

"Is there then any practical difference?"

"There is a real difference, and to confound the two may lead to very great practical errors. The supernatural truths of revelation were revealed to the minds of the sacred writers, not to their pens and fingers' ends, and are distinct from the dead letters in which they may be clothed. Revelation had thus an existence before the characters of Holy Writ, and would continue to exist in the minds of men, although certainly at great disadvantage, if all the Bibles in the world were lost. A deistical

poet of our day spoke more wisely, therefore, than he meant, when he said :

‘The word unto the Prophet spoken,  
Was writ on tables yet unbroken.”

“Pray tell me,” inquired Walter, “what do you understand by the Word of God?”

“It is used in different senses. There is the primal and eternal Word or Wisdom of God, a word spoken only within the divine circle of the Blessed Trinity. This must be distinguished from the knowledge of that word communicated *ad extra*, as the theologians say, to man, which is revelation, or the revealed word of God. This last again is distinguishable from the sounds, letters, characters, or signs, whatever they may be, which represent it, and may vary without doing violence to it, as happens in good translations. These sounds, letters, and signs are only the external habiliments and monuments of revelation, and serve as the vehicles by which it is transferred from one mind to another, or recalled to memory. By themselves alone, existing independently of the mind, they are but hollow sounds, or lifeless forms, and therefore when a Bible becomes too old to use, or is mutilated, or badly printed, we burn it without injury to anything sacred.”

“These distinctions are very obvious,” said Walter, “and yet, I fancy, they are not often kept in view. And now, one word more in regard to the integrity of the Old Testament. I shall require to be certified of the authenticity of each and every book.”

“I trust to give you good proofs, my boy, which will apply to them all. Do you insist upon a separate argument for each and every book?”

Walter reflected for a moment, and then answered :

"No, sir ; if your proofs are good, and really cover all that is comprised in the Old Testament, I am bound, of course, to be satisfied."

"Why, certainly. At the same time, I beg leave to say, that one may not honestly refuse his credit to every book until they are all proved. When, for example, it is demonstrated to him, that the five books of Moses are authentic, and truthful, they have a claim upon his faith, and he cannot honestly withhold it until he becomes equally satisfied with the others. But you will have little difficulty, I apprehend, in this respect. There are disputes among Christians in regard to the *inspiration* of some few of the later books ; none that I know of in regard to their authenticity."

"Well, well, Uncle Bird, take your own way ; only be sure to make out your case. Genuine, uncorrupted, *truthful*—don't forget that last point. An authentic book of fables would be, after all, nothing more than a book of fables."

"Never fear ; you shall be satisfied. We understand each other now, I think. It was well to define our terms. The adversaries of the Bible are accustomed to build their arguments upon a confusion of terms. This it must be our study to avoid. And now, my dear boy, I am not quite ready to commence our discussion to-night, and so I propose to adjourn for one week."

"Well, so be it ! Next Saturday night ; and mind, Uncle Jonathan, I shall expect to find you loaded and primed ; otherwise I shall take your battery by assault."

"Out upon you, saucy rebel ! I defy you. Attack if you dare ; I'll disperse you with grape and shell."

The Saturday following, I produced an essay which the reader will find in the next chapter. Walter read, and I listened.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE CHRISTIAN WITNESSES.

“And there, apart, he set a seal  
On the twelve tribes of Israel;  
But when he to the crowd advanced,  
The sun so full and brightly glanced  
Upon their glistening dress,  
And then they waved their palms on high  
With such a rending jubilant cry,  
And in one mighty press  
Around the man  
Together ran,  
While on the air upborne,  
A thousand skirts of waving white  
Gleamed like the flocks of cloudlets bright  
In sunny air at morn.”—FABER.

HOWEVER obstinately the opponents of the Hebrew Scriptures contest their antiquity, past question is it, they must refer them back, at least, as far as the dawn of Christianity. The whole structure of the Christian faith is founded on the Jewish records. The Church appears before the world with the Law of Moses in one hand, and the Gospel in the other. “The Law was given by Moses,” she cries; “grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” “We have found him, that Moses in the Law, and the Prophets wrote of—Jesus of Nazareth.”<sup>1</sup> It is necessary, therefore, to summon these Christians, and oblige them to give an account of the antique Mosaic records which we find in their hands. We invite the author of the

<sup>1</sup> John i, 17, 45.

"Age of Reason," or rather some one of those to whom his mantle has fallen, to be the examiner. He will find his Christian witness in any part of the world; he may address him in any language, and cross-question him at pleasure. To save all embarrassment, we will furnish him with a qualified witness, a place for examination, and an audience before whom the witness cannot prevaricate.

Almost in the heart of the "Eternal City," not far from the Corso, and bordering on the Piazza d'Espagna, the locality where our own countrymen, as well as the English, are wont for the most part to choose their quarters when in Rome, stands the Urban College, so called, or the Seminary of the Propaganda. There are gathered together a choice band of young Christian scholars from all the nations of the earth, and speaking every variety of language. Entering by the gate of this college, we mount the great staircase, and pass along the open gallery of the first floor to the great door which leads to the principal corridor. Following this again, we come to the gate of the principal hall, which I will describe as it appeared to the correspondent of an American gazette, on the morning of Thursday, July 17th, 1834.<sup>1</sup> The room is about eighty feet in length, by perhaps forty wide, and twenty in height. Its walls are decorated with paintings of the martyred students of the college, under the infliction of those deadly pains, by which in distant lands they were made to suffer for their faith, or their noble discharge of duty—an ever lively lesson for the youth who succeed them, to show what constancy the Church expects from them in similar circumstances. At the further extremity of the hall, opposite the door, is a carpeted platform elevated two steps; upon this a young Kentuckian is seated, with a small table before him, having also seated

<sup>1</sup> U. S. "Cath. Miscellany:" Letters from Rome.

by him, on one side his professor of theology, a Roman, and on the other his professor of law, a Bavarian count, who is also a priest and rector of the college. Seated on your right as you enter the hall, and near this platform, presides the renowned scholar Angelo Mai. A range of chairs extends on either side, having a passage of about ten feet wide in the centre, from the door to the platform. These chairs are appropriated to such prelates, and other dignitaries of the Church, as are present, and to the professors. Ranges of benches parallel to these, and behind, are thronged by students of this, and of the other colleges, and by many strangers.

What is the meaning of this assemblage? It is this; our young American on the platform has just finished his course of studies, and applies for his degree. In conformity with the established custom, he published yesterday an address in Latin to the superiors of the institution, in which, after recounting the benefits he had received within it, he declared his intention to express his gratitude by publicly maintaining his theses, which embody the doctrine he will endeavor to teach in the distant region to which he is about to return. "For this purpose he will appear, God willing, in the morning, in the great hall of the college, when and where it shall be lawful for any one, who thinks proper, to controvert what he undertakes to defend; and in the afternoon he will appear in the college chapel, where three select champions will successively make their assaults, after which he will be ready to meet any other that may be disposed to try his strength." To this address was appended a list of the theses, consisting of 256 various propositions. Copies were sent around to the other colleges, and to the various literary institutions of the city.

At the time we enter the hall, this youthful champion

has been already several hours sharply engaged in disputation, in the Latin language, with men of various nations and of no ordinary calibre; not merely his fellow students, but doctors, bishops, and cardinals, the most eminent in the Church, have successively attacked him, and he has not failed or hesitated in a single answer. Here is a glorious opportunity for one of our infidel doctors. Let him compel our young Christian scholar to account for his Bible. The successful studies he has made assure us of his competency to give testimony, and, if not—that audience which surrounds him, the fairest representative perhaps of the wisdom of Christendom will be guarantee enough for his answers. Begin, Doctor!

*Dr. Incredulus.* Witness, what is your religious profession?

*Testis Fidelis.* I am a Christian.

*Dr. Inc.* Now then, young man, I charge you to answer truly to the Christian tradition in the matters which I propose.

*Testis.* This assembly which surrounds us shall be surety for that.

*Dr. Inc.* How did you Christians come by these Scriptures?

*Testis.* They have been our familiar family records since the time of the Apostles.

*Dr. Inc.* In what way did the books of the Old Testament come into your possession?

*Testis.* We found them in the hands of the Jews more than 1800 years ago.

*Dr. Inc.* Eighteen hundred years ago! So then you Christians have had the Bible to yourselves all this long while. Have you not altered and arranged it to suit yourselves?

*Testis.* We have not had it exclusively to ourselves,



—certainly not the Old Testament. We have had the Jews to watch us. In the same way, they could not tamper with it without being detected by us.

*Dr. Inc.* Perhaps you have agreed together.

*Testis.* You cannot say so seriously. What religious sympathy could ever subsist between the two. How could we meet to concert such a fraud? how carry it out? how keep it secret so long? But let this supposition pass! It is not worth arguing, and you would be ashamed to insist upon it. I have other reasons in abundance why we could not add anything to the Bible, or falsify it in any part.

*Dr. Inc.* Let me hear them.

*Testis.* We Christians have been ourselves too numerous to agree upon any such fraud.

*Dr. Inc.* You were not so numerous in the beginning.

*Testis.* Indeed, in the very days of the Apostles we were spread over the whole civilized earth, and even farther. The Apostle Paul expresses his joy over this in writing to the Christians of Rome: "*I give thanks to my God, through Jesus Christ, for you all, because your faith is spoken of in the whole world.*"<sup>1</sup> Our heathen persecutors bear reluctant testimony to our numbers. The Roman historian Tacitus, describing that early persecution under Nero, in which two Apostles were victims, says that there was already in the city of Rome itself an immense multitude of Christians.<sup>2</sup> Pliny, who was proconsul in Asia during the reign of Trajan, found us so numerous that it was an embarrassing matter to know how to punish us, and therefore wrote to the Emperor as follows: "It has appeared to me to be a matter worth consulting about, especially on account of the number of

<sup>1</sup> Rom. i, 8.

<sup>2</sup> Annal., lib. xv, cap. 44.

those who are exposed to danger ; for many of every age and rank, and of both sexes, are put in peril already, and will be hereafter. This contagion is not only spread about in the cities, but in the villages and farms. And yet it seems to me that it may be arrested and corrected. At all events, it is certain that the temples which were but just now abandoned, have begun to be frequented once more, and the sacred solemnities long discontinued to be called for again. Here and there, also, victims are sold, which hitherto found few purchasers."<sup>1</sup>

*Dr. Inc.* It makes little difference whether Christians have been few or many. The knowledge of the Bible has been confined to the priests until of late. Now "we know that men, and especially priests can tell lies,"<sup>2</sup> and so could they cut, carve, and splice the Bible as they pleased, and make it lie for them. Could they not, my young neophyte?

*Testis.* No ; they could not. Even were it possible for the clergy to combine together for such a purpose, the Scriptures have never been their exclusive property, as I can very easily show. It was the custom of the Church, from the very earliest times, to have them read at public worship. Tertullian, who lived and wrote in the second century, not only gives us to understand this, but plainly asserts that in certain churches the very autographs of the Apostles were still preserved, and read aloud to the people. These are his words : "Go search through the Apostolical churches, where the very chairs of the Apostles yet preside in their own places, where their own original epistles are read, sounding the voice and representing the face of each ;"<sup>3</sup> and then he specifies the churches

<sup>1</sup> Ad Trajanum, l. x, epist. 97.

<sup>2</sup> Paine's Reply to the Bp. of Llandaff.

<sup>3</sup> De Praescrip., c. 26.

of Corinth, Philippi, Thessalonica, Ephesus, and that of Rome.

St. Justin Martyr, a still earlier authority, in his Apology, written about A. D. 160, testifies that both the Old Testament, and the gospels of the New, were accustomed to be read in the Christian assemblies. For this purpose, the office of Lector, or public reader, was already, in his day, instituted in the Church.<sup>1</sup>

How universal has been the publication of these sacred books, through the whole period of our era, is proved by the fact that they have been the constant subject of commentary, criticism, and quotation. Not only our own writers, but heretics, Jewish Rabbins, and in the beginning heathen adversaries also, have been familiar with them. Our Christian forefathers, sir, in particular, were no unlettered boors. They have been remarkably addicted to reading and writing, and the study of the Scriptures, as you may convince yourself by a visit to any well-furnished theological library. There you will see that the works of the Christian Fathers alone, cannot be compressed into less than 150 large volumes, forming a golden chain of authors from the Apostolic times down to St. Bernard in the 11th century, who closes the list. Among these we have authentic writings of St. Clement of Rome, Sts. Barnabas, Hermas, Ignatius, Polycarp, Papias, and probably of St. Denis, written before that century had closed which saw the Saviour of the world living, walking about and teaching in Galilee and Judea. The most of these works are loaded with quotations from the Old Testament, as well as the New. I doubt not that were all the copies of the Bible to be destroyed, it would not be difficult to cull from this storehouse of patristic lore the entire text of the New Testament, and

<sup>1</sup> Apud Curs. Compl. SS. S. IV, p. LXX.

to say the least, a very substantial account of the Old. In truth, the commentaries and epistles of St. Jerome alone, would nearly suffice for this purpose, to say nothing of his translation of the whole Bible into Latin from the original Hebrew. To place the origin of the Old Testament Scriptures, or any part of them, in Christian times, is to cast discredit on all we possess of ancient literature.

Formerly in the Christian churches, two repositories were placed on either side of the apse. In one was kept the Eucharist, and in the other the manuscripts of Holy Writ.<sup>1</sup> Do not imagine that these manuscripts were preserved there only as objects of curiosity, or veneration, or for public reading on the Sundays. They were intended also for the student, and the pious reader who might come to meditate upon the sacred pages. In the cathedral church of Nola, erected by St. Paulinus in the commencement of the 5th century, he caused to be placed, so he states in a letter to a friend, appropriate inscriptions over these repositories; on the right, an invitation to pray, and on the left, the following lines:

“Who in celestial meditation would engage,  
Here let him sit and scan the sacred page.”<sup>2</sup>

On the whole, Doctor, I think I have already said enough to convince you that, however much priests may love to tell lies, they have had little chance to falsify the Jewish records, or their own. It would be a hopeless task, surely, in the face of this multitude of witnesses;

<sup>1</sup> Corn. à Lapide, Proem. in Pentateuch.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 12 ad Severum:

“Hic locus est veneranda, quâ conditur et quâ  
Ponitur alma sacri pompa ministerii.”

“Si quem sancta tenet meditandi in lege voluptas,  
Hic poterit residens sacris intendere libris.”

and—how make their forgeries live out so long and quiet a life!

*Dr. Inc.* You have displayed both craft and learning, my young friend; but mark, now, how plain a tale shall put you down. It was at the beginning of the Christian delusion that these impostures were all palmed off upon the world. "When the Church mythologists established their system, they collected all the writings they could find, and managed them as they pleased. It is matter altogether of uncertainty to us, whether such of the writings as now appear under the name of the Old and New Testament, are in the same state in which these collectors say they found them, or whether they added, altered, abridged, or dressed them up."<sup>1</sup>

*Testis.* Where did this happen, Doctor?

*Dr. Inc.* I cannot tell.

*Testis.* When did it happen?

*Dr. Inc.* I cannot tell.

*Testis.* Who were the mythologists that did this?

*Dr. Inc.* I cannot tell.

*Testis.* Is there any history that gives account of it?

*Dr. Inc.* Not that I know of. Foxes are accustomed to follow their knavery by moonlight, and I suppose all impostors have the same instinct.

*Testis.* All this then is merely a conjecture of yours?

*Dr. Inc.* Well, from the nature of the case it must be so. "Who the people were that did all this, we know nothing of; they called themselves by the general name of the Church, and this is all we know of the matter."<sup>2</sup> At all events, they managed to pass off their canon upon the people.

*Testis.* How was that done?

*Dr. Inc.* "They decided by vote which of the books,

<sup>1</sup> Paine, *Age of Reason*, part I.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

out of the collection they had made, should be the Word of God, and which should not. They rejected several; they voted others to be doubtful, such as the books called the Apocrypha; and those books which had a majority of votes, were voted to be the Word of God. Had they voted otherwise, all the people since calling themselves Christians, had believed otherwise—for the belief of the one comes from the vote of the other. \* \* \* As we have no other external evidence or authority for believing these books to be the Word of God than what I have mentioned, which is no authority at all, I come in the next place to examine the internal evidence.”<sup>1</sup>

*Testis.* Not so fast, Doctor; that will come better by and by. We have some external signs of life left yet. In the first place, we are not now discussing the divine authority of these books; but nevertheless you have struck upon something which will throw light upon their authenticity. Allow me a few questions.

*Dr. Inc.* Ask.

*Testis.* On what occasion did the Church mythologists take this vote?

*Dr. Inc.* I do not know precisely. I have never lumbered my head much with Church history. It was in one of those conclaves of priests called councils.

*Testis.* Was it a general council, or a local one? Was it public, or did the mythologists assemble without the knowledge of others interested in the matter?

*Dr. Inc.* It was public, of course; some show was necessary to make it pass off with the people. I presume, for the same reason, it pretended to be a general one.

*Testis.* Did they bring forward these Scriptures for

<sup>1</sup> Age of Reason, part I. In this short way, Paine disposes of the external proofs both of the divine and historical authority of the Bible.

the first time at this council, or where they known before?

*Dr. Inc.* It is not likely that they were then produced for the first time. That would have been too broad a farce.

*Testis.* Was this council held at the same time you say the Church mythologists established their system?

*Dr. Inc.* I suppose not. The system must have been, to some extent, already established, or they could not meet publicly for such a purpose.

*Testis.* Were the Old Testament books known at the time of the establishment of the Christian system, as you call it, or were they collected afterward?

*Dr. Inc.* They must have been already known—some of them, at least. They were necessary to make the people swallow down the new revelation. But these questions are all to no purpose. It makes no difference when, where, or how these books became current; they are full of miracles, mysteries, and ghost stories, and that's enough to condemn them in the mind of any man of common sense.

*Testis.* I beg your pardon, Doctor. When we open the Bible, you and your infidel brethren are wont to say that you want proofs, and not preaching. You laugh at the internal evidences we bring, as if we had no other. You clamor for external proofs, and yet when we bring them, you run again to hunt for difficulties beneath the cover. Since you have shut the Bible, leave it so until we have had time to examine the back.

*Dr. Inc.* Have your own way then. But ask me no more questions of Christian chronology. I am not learned, thank God, in Church Latin, and have troubled my brain little with Church history. The world has had too much of it.

*Testis.* Indeed, Doctor, the world has had a great deal of it, for the history of the Church is half the history of the world. I have asked so many questions to show that these, and such like charges, are made in ignorance, without proofs, and depend for their entire strength upon the ignorance of those to whom they are addressed. Let us return now to the subject of canons and councils, and allow me to help you to a little more accurate information. It is very natural, considering the number of the sacred writers, the multiplicity of heads which compose so large a society as that of the Church, and the nature of the human mind, that questions should arise (especially in the beginning) with regard to the true list of books which should be held for sacred or inspired. It could not be otherwise. *If a doubt of this nature should have any breadth of circulation*, no more satisfactory way could be found to settle it than by a general council, gathered from all parts of the world, which represents the collective memory and wisdom of all the faithful, and can testify to the prevailing tradition and belief.

It is remarkable, nevertheless, that, although here and there at times, in the infancy of the Church, a question was raised in some particular quarter with regard to the *inspiration* of one or another book<sup>1</sup> read in the Christian assemblies, and some local councils took up the matter, yet the great body of the faithful should be able to agree together so comfortably on the same catalogue, that *no council claiming to be œcumenical or general ever deemed it necessary to legislate on the subject* until the Council of Trent, three hundred years ago. At that time, it was thought necessary to take measures to secure

<sup>1</sup> At the present day, Protestants as well as the Jews deny the inspiration (*but not therefore the authenticity*) of what are termed by them the Apocryphal Books of the Old Testament. Vide *infra*, chap. ix, on the canon.



the integrity of the sacred volume against innovation. The Council hereupon declared and published her *canon*, that is to say, a decree containing a catalogue of the true books of sacred Scripture, as recognized by the traditions of the Catholic Church. This is the first canon of the kind known to have been promulgated by a general council. The general unanimity which existed before that among Christians, was the only voting on the subject except by local councils. Now, this common consent to the inspiration of these books must, of course, imply a unanimity also in favor of their authenticity.

What say you, Doctor? This does not look like manufacturing revelation by vote. Methinks, on the contrary, so early, so long lived, constant and general a concurrence of faith on the part of such a multitude of people, of every land and language, affords no small proof of the authenticity of a document of any kind. You know what the old Greek poet says :

“Not wholly void of truth, I deem, can be  
What many nations hold for history.”<sup>1</sup>

At all events, so far as relates to the books of the Old Testament, with which we are particularly concerned at present, it is clear that none of them can have originated in Christian times. We must go look for them in the Old World. Have you any other difficulties to propose, Doctor?

*Dr. Inc.* I have finished what I wished to say.

*Testis.* Farewell, then ; and pray, before you leave this ancient city, ask some one to show you through the Catacombs. You will find some interesting memorials of these early Church mythologists.

When my young friend had finished reading this

<sup>1</sup> Hesiod, Works and Days.

manuscript, he remained silent for some time, gazing thoughtfully into the fire. "Well, Uncle Jonathan," said he at last, "this seems quite satisfactory so far as it goes. The Old Testament books are, beyond a doubt, older than Christianity. If there has been any forgery committed, we must look farther back. There are some other questions suggested to my mind in connection with what I have just read, but as they do not fall within our programme, I will not stir them now. What shall be our special topic next week?"

"Next Saturday," said I, "we will go back to times before the year of Our Lord one. But be careful, and keep a bright eye open. We are about to leave our Christian kinsfolk behind us, and henceforth we shall have to deal with Pagans and Jews."

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE HEATHEN WITNESSES.

"If on the Book itself we cast our view,  
Concurrent heathens prove the story true."

*Religio Laici.*

ON the ensuing Saturday, my sister Becky, a pious, true-hearted, albeit simple-minded soul who presides over my little household, applied to be admitted to our conference, bringing her knitting with her. I was disposed to demur, but Walter politely interceded, and as she promised to be silent, I thought best to yield the point. It may not be altogether irrelevant to state that she presented my skeptical young friend on this occasion with a new Bible, which (albeit, as he informed me afterward, the ninth he had already received from pious ladies of the village) he accepted with the utmost gratitude.

These preliminaries being arranged, I produced my manuscript, which Walter read aloud as follows :

Before bringing forward our heathen witnesses to the authenticity of the Hebrew Scriptures, we have a few words to say in regard to the high antiquity we claim for them, especially for the five books of Moses. In doing this our purpose is to guard the reader against misapprehending the argument of this chapter. The testimony of heathen authors does not, by any means, present the strong points of our argument, and must not be expected,

by itself alone, to make out a full case. The Gentile historians are young compared to those of the Jews. We give them simply for what they are worth. They are like little children who may sometimes put in a word for their elders, when in truth the elders are better able to speak for themselves. The Jews can say to them all what an Egyptian priest, according to Plato, said to Solon and the Greeks: "Solon! Solon! you Greeks are always children, and aged Greek there is none. You are all youths in intelligence, for you hold no ancient opinions derived from remote tradition, nor any system of discipline that can boast of a hoary old age."<sup>1</sup> These heathen writers; nevertheless, were men of sense, and learning, and if the Jewish records passed for authentic with them in their day, it suggests a lesson to the skeptic of ours.

These records lead us back, not only beyond our own Christian annals, but, as we have just intimated, far beyond the reach of any reliable Gentile history. The ancient authors, known to us, are mostly Greek and Roman, but, compared to the earlier books of the Old Testament, these are all modern. According to the ordinary computation, the prophet Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt 1491 years before the birth of Christ. Wilkinson and Bunsen, comparing these records with Egyptian chronology, fix the Exodus 167 years later. Grecian literature affords no author that can be compared with Moses in point of antiquity. Homer and Hesiod are believed to have written at some time between the year 800 and 1000 B. C.; Herodotus, the oldest Greek historian, 480 B. C. The Roman writers are still more recent.

The ancient books of the Hindoos, which some have pretended to compare with the Hebrew, are made up of mythological fable and philosophy. So mutilated and in-

<sup>1</sup> Timaeus.

terpolated are they, that all means of establishing a chronology, or any historical succession, is lost. They bear no testimony to their own age, or even to any relative priority among themselves. They can be of little service to us in our present inquiry. Chinese history, according to Abel Rémusat, reaches back as far as to the year 2200 before Christ, and plausible tradition to the year 2637. But all that remains of their literature is recent. Their earliest written history is by Confucius, who lived some 400 or 500 years before Christ, although, as he tells us, he compiled his history out of the fragments of earlier annals. Their literature does not appear to have been known to any of the sacred Hebrew writers, and it is not probable that the Hebrew Scriptures were much better known to them. Christian writers, nevertheless, find signs both in India and China, and among other ancient peoples, which are thought to indicate that some knowledge of the early prophets had been disseminated among them.

The traces of civilization in Egypt lead us back far, very far, into the dim regions of the past. The records of the Hebrews show us Egypt as a great empire when their nation was in its infancy, but many dynasties, even of Egyptian kings, had appeared upon the scene and disappeared, before that. Egyptian history is very old, but it is a skeleton history, a gaunt and spectral form rising up before us from the tombs, and pointing backward with its fleshless fingers. Its early history is a monumental history; its literature one of inscriptions, mortuary names, and epitaphs, and cannot be expected to testify much in the matter pending before us. A few years ago we might in all good faith and fairness have apostrophized Egypt in the language of a New England poet :

“O realm of silence, and of swart eclipse !  
The shapes that haunt thy gloom

Make signs to us, and move their withered lips  
Across the gulf of doom ;  
Yet all their sound and motion  
Bring no more freight to us than wraiths of ships  
On the mirage's ocean."

But this is not so true in our day. The study of the Egyptian monuments has become a new science since Champollion's magnificent discovery of the alphabet, and now throws a very appreciable light upon the sacred literature of the Hebrews. It explains more fully the meaning of certain passages in the Old Testament, and confirms the truthfulness of its statements in several particulars. It lends also valuable proof to its authenticity, by pointing out striking and unexpected instances of exactitude, on the part of the sacred penmen, which one writing long after the events narrated could not by any means have attained to. But these may be left for some future chapter when we shall come to speak of the truthfulness of our record.

What we have advanced hitherto has not been with the idea of comparing the chronology of the Bible with the chronologies of other nations, or to dispute the antiquity which these sometimes claim for themselves as nations. This does not belong to our present purpose. Our object has been to show, from the superior antiquity of the Hebrew Bible, as a literary work, that we must not look to heathen authors for such testimony to its authenticity as contemporary witnesses could give. They are merely witnesses to the thoughts of their own age and nation. It is nevertheless well worth our while to see what credit these authors do give to the Old Testament. It is worth something to know that they were not ignorant of its existence.

Let us now turn to such authors of this class as are

known to us—they are chiefly Grecian and Roman—and see what they tell us about the Jewish people, their religion, law, and literature.

That the Hebrew Scriptures were known to the earliest Grecian writers, may be inferred from the frequent mention made by them of the Jewish Sabbath, of which Calmet gives several examples.<sup>1</sup> “Aristobulus cites Homer and Hesiod, who speak of it very expressly, and thinks they found it in the Books of Moses. In Hesiod we read, *“The first, the fourth, and the seventh are holy days.”* In Homer, *“When the seventh day was come, which is a holy day ;”* and elsewhere, *“’Twas on the seventh day that all was finished.”* Other passages also of Linus are given, *“On the seventh day all was finished ;”* and again, *“The seventh day is one of the good days, a day of birth, one of the first days, a perfect day.”* St. Clement of Alexandria adds the Eclogues of Solon, which praise the seventh day as one of especial sanctity.<sup>1</sup> At a later epoch, Josephus in controversy with Appion boasts, “There is no city, neither of Barbarians, nor of Greeks, nor any nation where the religion of the Sabbath, in which we remain at rest, has not come.”

Diodorus Siculus, cited by St. Justin, says, in the first book of his history, that he learned from the priests in Egypt that Moses was a very ancient Lawgiver, and then continues as follows : “As regards the ancient manner of living which prevailed in Egypt, and which, according to fabulous report, was under Gods and Heroes, they relate that *Moses was the first who persuaded the multitude to accept and live by written laws*, and that he was a most praiseworthy man for the greatness of his mind, and the urbanity of his life.” Afterward he says that Moses worshipped the God *Jao*, which is evidently the Ja, or Jehovah of the Hebrews.

<sup>1</sup> Comm. in Gen., ch. ii.

Nicholas Damascenus, an author honored by the friendship of Herod and Augustus, and by no means ignorant of Jewish affairs, being a native of Tyre, relates in the 96th book of his History that, after the deluge, the Ark being carried into Armenia rested on the summit of a mountain, and that the remains of it were seen there long after; that in it had been shut up a man who escaped from the wreck, and that this was evidently the man "*of whom Moses the Lawgiver of the Hebrews had written.*"

Alexander Polyhistor, who wrote in the century before our era, has it in his Commentaries that a certain Cleodemus, who was also called Malcus, wrote a history of the Jews, "*after a copy of Moses the Lawgiver.*"<sup>1</sup>

Strabo, the great geographer of antiquity, writes as follows; that "Moses, hating the profane manners of the Egyptians, assembled together a great multitude of religious men, and retired with them into Judea where they settled, and sacred rites for divine worship having been instituted, and especially the worship of idols renounced and abjured, he confirmed his government not so much by force and arms as by the influence of religion."

Juvenal makes great sport of the Jews. In his sixth and fourteenth satires, he ridicules them for worshipping toward heaven without the use of images, which he calls adoring the clouds and the God of the sky. He does not spare the Roman ladies for consulting fortune-telling Jewesses, who pretend to understand the mysterious laws of Solyma or Salem, and sell a good fortune to all for a small fee:

"Aere minuto  
Qualiacumque voles Judaei somnia vendunt."

These words, the fortune-telling apart, might well be

<sup>1</sup> The above three citations are from Marchini. See *Cursus Compl.*, vol. iii.





employed to paint the popular idea of Jewish commerce in our day. He attacks also the same ladies for their attachment to a certain species of jewel which the incestuous Berenice, a Jewess and sister to Herod Agrippa, had introduced into fashion when at Rome. Of Judea he says: "It is a country where even kings keep Sabbath by going afoot, and where, by the indulgence of an ancient and benign custom, the pigs are let live to an old age." He gives, nevertheless, his testimony to the hatred the Jews had for idolatry, which he calls despising the Roman laws, to the antiquity of their religion, and to their attachment to their own Law, which, he says, "*Moses delivered to them in a secret or sacred volume.*"

"Romanas autem soliti contemnere leges,  
Judaicum ediscunt et servant ac metuunt jus,  
Tradidit arcano quodcumque volumine Moses."

Tacitus, although full of contempt and abhorrence for the Jews, never evinces any doubt of the antiquity of their Law, or that Moses was its author. On the other hand, his account corroborates the Scripture history in several points. He gives us different reports that were circulated in his day of the origin of this people; foolish rumors for the most part, but always with some foundation in true history. For the rest, the fact that this great historian could give no clear account of the origin of the Jews, is a strong proof of the great antiquity of their nation, and of their political and religious constitution. Had he condescended to consult their own archives, he would have been better informed.

"Since," he says, "we are going to relate the final period of this famous city (Jerusalem), it seems proper to give an account of its origin. There is a tradition that the Jews ran away from the island of Crete, and settled

themselves on the coast of Libya, and this at the time when Saturn was driven out of his kingdom by the power of Jupiter. An argument for it is drawn from their name. The mountain Ida is famous in Crete, and the neighboring inhabitants are called Idaei, which with a barbarous augment becomes the name of Judaei. Some say that they were a people very numerous in Egypt under the reign of Isis, and that the Egyptians got free from that burden by sending them into the adjacent countries, under their captains Hierosolymus and Judas. The greatest part say they were those Ethiopians whom fear and hatred obliged to change their habitations in the reign of King Cepheus.

“There are those who report that they were Assyrians, who, wanting lands, got together and obtained part of Egypt, and soon afterward settled themselves in cities of their own in the land of the Hebrews, and the parts of Syria that lay nearest to them.<sup>1</sup> Others pretend their origin to be more eminent, and that the Solymi, a people celebrated in Homer’s poems, were the founders of this nation, and gave this their own name Hierosolyma to the city they built there.”

Then follows a singular account of the exodus from Egypt. The reader will not fail to discover in it a distorted tradition of the plagues of Egypt, the wanderings of the Jews in the desert, the divine mission of Moses, the miraculous supply of water from the rock, and the expulsion of the Canaanites.

“Many authors agree, that when once an infectious distemper broke out in Egypt, and made men’s bodies impure, Bocchoris their king went to the oracle of (Jupiter) Hammon, and begged he would grant him some relief against this evil; and that he was enjoined to purge

<sup>1</sup> This is the true account. The Hebrews were Assyrians or Chaldeans.

his nation of them, and to banish this kind of men into other countries, as being hateful to the gods. That when he had sought for, and gotten them all together, they were left in a vast desert. That hereupon the rest devoted themselves to weeping and inactivity, but one of the exiles, Moses by name, advised them to look for no assistance from any of the gods, or from any of mankind, since they had been abandoned by both, but bade them believe in him as a celestial leader, by whose help they had already gotten clear of their present miseries. They agreed to it, and though they were unacquainted with everything, they began their journey at random.

“But nothing tried them so much as the want of water; and now they laid themselves down on the ground for the most part, as just ready to perish, when a herd of wild asses came from feeding, and went to a rock overshadowed by a grove of trees. Moses followed them, conjecturing that thereabouts there was some grassy soil, and so he opened large sources of water for them. That was an ease to them. And when they had journeyed continually six entire days, on the seventh day they drove out the inhabitants, and obtained those lands wherein their city and temple were dedicated.”

Now follows some testimony very direct to our purpose, avowing the antiquity of the Hebrew Law, and connecting it with Moses as the author.

“As for Moses, in order to secure the nation firmly to himself, he ordained new rites, and such as were contrary to those of other men.” “These rites,” he says afterward, “by what manner soever they were first begun, are supported by their antiquity. The rest of their institutions are awkward and impure, and got ground by their pravity.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hist. of the Jews, b. v.

All this account of the origin of the Jews, and of their law, is as favorable and as accurate as could be expected from an idolater, an enemy, and a stranger. Tacitus does not fail to give us also a pretty fair view of their chief distinctive doctrines.

“The Jews have no notion of any more than one divine Being, and that known only to the mind. They esteem such to be profane who frame images of gods out of perishable matter, and in the shape of men. Their doctrine is that this Being is supreme, eternal, immutable, and imperishable. Accordingly they have no images in their cities, much less in their temples. They never grant this piece of flattery to kings, or this kind of honor to emperors.”

How wonderful is it that, amid the idolatrous nations of the old world, one only people should have found a doctrine so holy and preserved it so long! How wonderful also that this Roman historian could even state that doctrine so well, and yet remain blind to its truth and sublimity. Alas! like many of the learned of our day, these heathen authors were not always true philosophers, that is, lovers of truth. They did not seek truth for truth's sake, and so their foolish hearts became darkened. No doubt, they were more excusable in their day, for that they knew little at best of these sacred oracles, and had small means and opportunity to study them, and extract the wisdom they contain. They recognized however their authenticity by the external evidence they had, namely, the testimony of others. We trust, gentle reader, you will give all due weight to theirs.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE HEBREW WITNESSES.

"I believe with a perfect faith that the whole Law of Commandments, which we now have in our hands, was given to Moses, our master, on whom be peace!"--*Creed of Maimonides.*

Thus far our way has been easy. We have sailed on the broad ocean, and by our side we have had the well known charts of Christian and classical history to sail by. But now we come to inland waters, and must take our pilots from the territory we have to traverse. In other words, the great antiquity of the Hebrew Scriptures necessarily throws us upon Hebrew testimony for the earliest and most decisive proofs of their authenticity. We need not be sorry for this. Sailing on the great ocean is dull sailing after all. The range of vision is extensive, no doubt, but so much the less is to be seen. The intelligent traveller to the Holy Land does not fail to glean what he can from books and maps on the way, and so beguiles the weary hours, until at length the long-wished for coast is announced. Then mounting quickly to the deck, he gazes earnestly on the distant scene before him. 'As yet the hill tops cling together, and bays, points, islets, and inlets are all mingled in one long dim line of blue. There is little to be seen, but his eye gathers willingly in what it can. Every hour, while it narrows his range of vision, multiplies the sum of visible objects. And now, landed at last on the sacred soil, how glad is he to exchange his

scanty acquisitions for the rich details spread out around him in full form and color. One hour upon a Judean hill, or by the banks of the Jordan, or the silent shores of the Dead Sea, is worth more to him than all the charts that were ever drawn, or tales that ever pilgrims told. So, my reader, may it prove with us. Come! farewell to our old companions, both Christian and heathen! The Hebrews now must be our guides.

“There is one people,” so eloquently pleads a learned American Rabbi, “there is one people, the sole survivor of the really olden times when mankind was in its infancy—a people unmixed in lineage, unchanged in religious belief and observance, and whose history, down to the present day, inseparably connects itself with those primeval and most sacred records from which the civilized portion of mankind derives its faith, and on which it rests its hopes. This people—the Jews—has, beyond all others, exercised the most lasting influence on the human mind—an influence that has outlived the philosophy of Greece, and the statesmanship of Rome, and to which every succeeding century, every advance in knowledge, every discovery in science, every amelioration in the social system, affords greater strength, and a wider scope.”<sup>1</sup>

In truth, the Jewish people command a respectful attention. They exist in the world as a broad fact, and the world is bound to know and account for them. We find them, on the calendar of the past eighteen centuries, a numerous and distinct, but dispersed race, blending their political existence with the various races they cohabit with. Before that, however, they were a nation by themselves, a great and a civilized one, and as such were possessed of a national history. What is that history? The Jews answer this question now, as they did in their day of

<sup>1</sup> Raphall's Post-Bibl. Hist. of the Jews. Introduction.

glory, by pointing to the sacred records of their ancient republic. If we question the authenticity of these records, they give for voucher their national tradition. Let us see what is the value of this tradition.

The best and surest demonstration of the authority of any historical record, is that afforded by national tradition. When the record has been handed down, and perpetuated, and generally accredited by the very nation whence it sprung, and that nation no barbarous tribe, but a civilized people, and acquainted with letters, the proof is accepted by critics for complete. If, in addition to this, the record in question be, in great part, a book of annals, the public annals of the nation itself; if, moreover, it treats with authority of the national religion, and civil constitution; if again it consists not of one or other book or treatise, but of a continuous series of books, of which the later ones suppose always the existence of the preceding; if, once more, it was a popular record, perfectly well known at all times, and often read; if, finally, it records facts mortifying to the pride of the nation it belongs to, and even supplies powerful arguments which can be made use of against them by their adversaries, it would be under all these circumstances the very madness of skepticism to doubt its authenticity.

Such, nevertheless, are the Scriptures of the Old Testament, which, with all the conditions suggested above, have always been held for genuine, true, and uncorrupted by the entire Hebrew or Jewish race from the beginning unto our own day.

A more perfect and unassailable tradition never existed in any nation on earth than that which has brought down to us the sacred records of the Jews. By tradition we do not mean here simply oral or unwritten tradition, but in general that knowledge of any truth or fact, which, once

deposited in the mind of a community, is handed down and perpetuated from generation to generation, whether by word of mouth, by popular customs, by political institutions, by laws, festivals, ceremonies, by public monuments, or by the channels of literature. Tradition is therefore the memory of society; national tradition is the national memory, the consciousness which a nation retains of its own life and light,—of what it is and has been, of what it knows and has known.

Surely, every nation is possessed of this consciousness. We Americans of the Federal Union are perfectly conscious of our community life, and of our common experience. Our national existence does not cease with the death of individuals, nor can our common memory fail, and our store of public knowledge pass away. We can never forget the main features of our own history, or be taught to remember events which never happened, or be made to receive spurious journals for our national annals. An historian might introduce a great deal of false philosophy and false reasoning into his book, and account for facts most foolishly. He might do this even with impunity, if he happened, as the case commonly is, to chime in with our national prejudices, but he could not impose upon us inventions of his own for public transactions. The sentiments of a nation are not always right, nor its judgment profound, but the national memory is always excellent, and cannot be imposed upon. A learned chronicler of the country might deceive some of us, if he liked, in several points of our history, but he could not impose upon us all. He could not fabricate, for his own ends, one single event of any general interest, and if but one such attempt were found in his work, a groan of contempt would be raised, which would not cease to echo, until the work itself had ceased to be remembered.



In respect of its senses and its memory a nation differs much from an individual. It cannot be deceived by outward objects, it has too many eyes and ears. So, again, it never forgets what has once strongly impressed its senses. Its recollection cannot pass away through paralysis, or dotage. It never sleeps, and dreams, and so mistakes the visions of the night for its own actions. It never goes to bed drunk, to awaken in the morning quite unconscious of what it did the day before. A public event is a public treasure, sealed by thousands of witnesses, and guarded by thousands of sentinels. Such is the accuracy, such the tenacity of the national memory, and such in consequence the authority of national tradition. These principles are, we think, clear : now for their application.

The loud and general voice of Jewish tradition vouches for the authenticity of their sacred Records. Is there any sound principle of critical science or of common sense, upon which their tradition must be judged less conclusive than the traditions of other nations? On the contrary, the fact that above all people they have been always remarkable for their attachment to the old paths, ought to give an especial weight to their testimony.

"Others," writes the Jewish historian Josephus, "think it a fine thing to persevere in nothing that has been delivered down from their forefathers, and testify it to be an instance of the sharpest wisdom when men venture to transgress those traditions; whereas we, on the contrary, suppose it to be our only wisdom and virtue to admit no actions nor supposals that are contrary to our original laws."<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps an objection may be taken from the very antiquity of these records. "The origin of every nation,"

<sup>1</sup> Contra Appion, b. ii.

says Paine, "is buried in fabulous tradition, and that of the Jews is as much to be suspected as any other."

This argument is based on a false assumption. The origin of every nation is not buried in fabulous tradition. Nothing can be more certain, for instance, than the origin of our own, and the same may be said of other nations, both ancient and modern. The imputation is true, indeed, of barbarous nations, and of those which have grown out of barbarism into civilization, but neither does anything fabulous attach to these latter from the period when letters were introduced among them, and permanent governments established. It is true also of some other nations whose beginnings may not have been in barbarism, their early history having been swept away or inextricably confused by foreign conquests; or long continued anarchy. It is not true of the Jews. We know their origin in Abraham, and the whole course of their subsequent history. They were always a civilized and lettered people, and no nation of the old world was subject to so little of social and political change as they.

"I think," said Walter, parenthetically, "I think Paine has reference more especially to the Book of Genesis. The Hebrews cannot appear as witnesses to all the events recorded there of the primitive ages of the world, since they must have taken place long before their own nation had any existence."

"True, Walter; but you must bear in mind what the question is before us. I do not now produce the Hebrews as witnesses to the events recorded in Genesis, but to the authenticity of the Book—whether it belongs or not to their ancient literature, and whether their great Prophet be really the author. We shall have occasion afterward to examine its credibility as a history."

"It seems to me" insisted Walter, "that the earlier

part of the Book of Genesis cannot, properly speaking, be classified with Hebrew history. It is rather the primitive history of mankind according to the traditions of that people."

"You are right, my dear boy; I have no doubt of it. It makes no difference, however, in the question of *authenticity*, since Moses, the alleged author, was a Hebrew living among Hebrews. When we come to the *credibility* of the Old Testament, it will be time to inquire whether the same exactitude is to be looked for, when the Prophet treats of primitive history, as when he records the events of his own day."

"Why, if he was inspired in both cases, there can be no question of that, I should think."

"That will depend upon what we understand by inspiration. But all that in good time—read on!"

A great additional force is lent to our argument from Hebrew tradition, by the fact that the books in question are mostly historical, and constituted the only authoritative annals of the Republic and the Church. They were written by men in public life, the prophets of the nation, who oftentimes also held the office of ruler, general, judge, or king; and the original volumes or rolls were solemnly deposited in that safest and most sacred of repositories, the Ark of the Tabernacle. These books moreover contained the genealogies of the tribes, and especially of the tribe of Levi, and of the priestly family of Aaron, which was a point of capital interest to the Jews, as only this family were eligible to the priesthood, and only this tribe admitted in any way to the service of the Temple. Judge, then, how great and universal an interest was attached to the genuineness and integrity, and safe-keeping of these national annals. The great care taken of them cannot be better stated than by borrowing the words of the celebrated

Jewish historian Josephus. Of the learning of this author, St. Jerome says: "It seems to me a miraculous thing how one that was a Hebrew, instructed in his infancy in sacred learning, should be able to produce such a number of testimonies out of profane authors, as if he had read over all the Grecian libraries."<sup>1</sup> The celebrated classical critic Joseph Scaliger says that "Josephus was the most diligent, and the greatest lover of truth of all writers," and that "it is more safe to believe him, not only as to the affairs of the Jews, but also of those that are foreign to them, than all the Greek and Latin writers; and this because his fidelity and compass of learning are everywhere conspicuous."<sup>2</sup>

Let this Jewish witness come upon the stand, and speak for the law, and the honor of his nation.

"We who are Jews," he writes, "must yield to the Grecian writers as to language and elegance of composition, but then we shall give them no such preference as to the verity of ancient history, and least of all as to that part which concerns the affairs of our several countries." Then, after admitting the great care of the Egyptians and Babylonians to write down their records, he continues: "Our forefathers took no less care about writing such records, and committed that matter to their high priests and to their prophets, and these records have been written all along down to our times with the utmost accuracy. What is the strongest argument of our exact management in this matter is what I am now going to say; that we have the names of our high priests from father to son set down in our records for the interval of two thousand years, and if any of them have been transgressors of these rules (namely, not to marry out of the nation, and to keep an

<sup>1</sup> Epist. 34, ad Magnum.

<sup>2</sup> De Emend. Temp. apud Whiston.

exact account of their own and their wives' genealogies), they are prohibited to present themselves at the altar, or to be partakers of any other of our purifications. And this is justly, or rather necessarily done, because every one is not permitted, of his own accord, to be a writer, nor is there any disagreement in what is written, they only being prophets that have written the original and earliest accounts of things as they learned them of God himself by inspiration; and others have written what happened in their own times, and that in a very distinct manner also.

“For we have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing from and contradicting one another, as the Greeks have, but only twenty-two books, which contain the records of all the past times, which are justly believed to be divine. And of them, five belong to Moses, which contain his laws and the traditions of the origin of mankind until his death. This interval of time was little short of 3,000 years; but as to the time from the death of Moses until the reign of Artaxerxes, king of Persia, who reigned after Xerxes, the prophets who were after Moses wrote down what was done in thirteen books. The remaining four books contain hymns to God, and precepts for the conduct of human life. It is true, our history has been written since Artaxerxes very particularly, but has not been esteemed of the like authority with the former by our forefathers, because there has not been an exact succession of prophets since that time. How firmly we have given credit to these books of our own nation is evident by what we do. For during so many ages as we have already passed, no one has been so bold as either to add anything to them, or to make any change in them, but it has become natural to all Jews, immediately and from their very birth, to esteem those books to contain

divine doctrines, and to persist in them, and if occasion be, willingly to die for them.”<sup>1</sup>

How beautifully clear and direct is this author's argument for the antiquity, authenticity, and integrity of the sacred records of his nation, and how can we refuse to admit it? Who will ever believe that the whole Hebrew race, so careful and jealous of their records, so watchful of their annalists, could be deceived in such a matter? Or who could dream, that, if not deceived themselves, they could combine to deceive the world?

Another argument against the possibility of deception in this matter is to be found in the special character of these books, for they contain in combination the two things which, of all others, the popular mind clings to with all the energy and jealousy of its affections, namely: the national religion, and the civil constitution. To the Hebrews their Scriptures were at once the cherished articles of their religion, and the charter of their civil rights. They were not merely treatises on political or religious matters, but the authoritative documents, the rule of common faith and worship, and the standard statutes of law. Such things cannot easily be robbed from a nation, and surely never forged or falsified in their midst. On the other hand, could ever a people have such peculiar monuments as these, and not know how they came by them? Verily, it seems our skeptical critics would have us believe that the Hebrews had all passed simultaneously through some process of witchery like that which befell Titania in the wood of Athens. Having carelessly gone to sleep by the moonlight, they fell into the hands of the fairies, who sprinkled their eyes with the juice of charmed flowers, and thus bound them by a spell to believe the first lie proposed to them, however monstrous it might be.

<sup>1</sup> Contra Appion, b. i. Whiston's Trans.

“What thou seest when thou dost wake,  
Do it for thy true love take ;  
Be it ounce, or cat, or bear,  
Pard, or boar with bristled hair,  
In thine eye that shall appear  
When thou wak'st, it is thy dear.”

And then, forsooth, on awakening they were made to embrace these forged writings for ancient and cherished records of the nation.

Or rather, on the contrary, dear reader—to speak more soberly—when we see this whole nation so united and confident in the possession of their sacred chronicles, must we not accept them as genuine from their hands, and say with thoughtful Hippolyta, in the same play :

“That all their minds transfigured so together  
More witnesseth than fancy's images,  
And grows to something of great constancy.”

Perhaps, an objection may be taken against us from that very national sentiment which we have enlisted in our argument. The Jews, it will be said, were a proud people in their way, and pride can go far in deluding the mind, and falsifying the conscience. May not that pride have aided the impostors in securing the countenance of the people to writings professedly so ancient, and reflecting such honor on the nation ?

It cannot be denied that, on many accounts, the Jews have reason to glory in their records ; but it would be difficult to draw from this a sufficient reason to account for the *original* delusion of so great a multitude, or a sufficient motive to make them all deceivers. Such an argument can scarcely arise to the dignity of a conjecture. In the face of that array of proofs we furnish, it figures somewhat like a poodle in a lion hunt.

Besides, a simple inspection of the Scriptures soon

enables us to reverse this reasoning. We see nothing there that looks like a systematic flattering of Jewish pride. On the contrary, we find such plain talking, such severe castigations of the popular vices, such lively ridicule of their characteristic follies, such a faithful exhibition of events humiliating to the whole nation ; so little management is there to spare even their patriarchs, their high priests, their prophets, their princes, and the heroes of their history, that we wonder rather how truth itself can be so bold, blunt, and simple. Surely, the Jewish people could never have been persuaded to admit the fidelity of these unpleasant pictures, if they were not authentic. A man must perforce acknowledge his own photographic likeness, however ugly it may present him. He would not, may be, if it came from another artist ; but it was the truthful sun did it, and it were a useless effort to outface the bright sun with a denial.

It is not necessary here to allege instances of this kind of plain dealing. They are familiar to every one who is at all familiar with the Scriptures.

We find there other truths far more painful to the sensibilities of the people, and mortifying to their pride, as well as crushing to their highest hopes. On these sacred pages are blazoned those prophecies which predict the final destruction of their state, their temple, and their hierarchy upon the coming of the Messias, their own rejection and dispersion, and the gathering in of the Gentiles to a new church, and a new priesthood.

We will not delay the reader by quoting the well known prophecy of Daniel,<sup>1</sup> which is both direct and terrible. In the following short passage from Malachy we have an oracle of mingled wrath and mercy,—the rejection of the Jews with their sacrifices, and the vocation of the Gentile

<sup>1</sup> Dan. ix, 24-27.



world, with the institution of a catholic church, and an universal sacrifice.

*"I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts: and I will not receive a gift of your hand.*

*"For from the rising of the sun even to the going down, my name shall be great among the Gentiles: and in every place there shall be sacrifice, and a pure oblation offered to my name: for my name shall be great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of hosts."*<sup>1</sup>

From this point of view, there is something very mournful and touching in the history of this ancient people. Through the long vista of ages we see them moving forward, as if on a funeral march to the tomb of the nation, bearing before them, in sad but signal honor, these sacred Scriptures, the memorials of their past glory, and the oracles of their approaching death. The promised destruction comes at length—their city and temple are laid in ashes ;

"Tribes of the wandering foot and weary breast,"

they are driven out from their fatherland, and scattered among the nations, carrying these oracles with them still, the only relic left to remind them of their faded fortunes. But this is not all. One grief more they have, to crown the bitter cup of their mortification. Their very oracles desert them, and take part with their Christian adversaries, who, from their own Law, and their own prophets, draw fatal arguments to convict them of their religious errors, and the sterility of their hopes. If, say they,

"If you have writ your annals true, 'tis there!"

How faithfully, nevertheless, they cling to this dear monument of their sin, punishment, and shame! It is all they

<sup>1</sup> Malach. i, 10, 11. See also Gen. xlix, 10 ; Isai. lxvi, 19-21.

have left to them of better days. Temple, priesthood, sacrifices, their sacred city, their country, the tombs of their fathers,—all are lost, and in lieu of all the former splendor of their ceremonial, remains to them only a melancholy procession in the synagogue, with the Books of the Law, a weekly symbol of their long spiritual bereavement, and national desolation. Alas! princely, but forlorn and fallen race! “*Thou hast seen the Gentiles enter into thy sanctuary : the enemy hath put out his hand to all thy desirable things.*” Thou hast left to thee only the skeleton of thy former grandeur; and we, the children of the heathen, are the heirs to thy patriarchs and lawgivers, thy warriors and sacred bards:

“To thee thy dross is clinging;  
For us thy martyrs die, thy prophets see,  
Thy poets still are singing.”

We do not say these things in a spirit of mockery. We only wish to show what impartial witnesses the Jews are to the genuineness of the Bible, which they cling to, while it shames and afflicts them. Otherwise, our heart leads us to honor the Judæan blood, for it is akin to that royal current that flowed through the veins of our Saviour, and besprinkled his cross. The earnest and kindly interest with which the Holy Church regards this ancient people is beautifully represented by an incident in the life of Pope Innocent II. “At Paris he was received with great magnificence. The Jews themselves, says the chronicler, came forth to meet him full of joy, and offered him a roll of their Law, covered with a veil. The Pope received them with great interest, and said to them, as he accepted their gift: ‘AUFERAT DEUS OMNIPOTENS VELAMEN A CORDIBUS VESTRIS!’”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “May Almighty God lift away the veil from your hearts!” Hist. of St. Bernard, by Ratisbonne, chap. xix.

Sister Becky was not a little affected by this concluding incident, and a tear stood in her eye. "That was a dear good man, that Pope," said she, "and what a charming answer he made them. Isn't it singular, though, that the Jews should present him with a Bible?"

"Not at all," said I, "it was quite appropriate. We are all indebted to the Jews for the Old Testament, and in truth the Gospel also. For my part, I cannot sympathize with those Christians who profess to feel an antipathy toward them, as being the rejectors and crucifiers of our Lord. The present Jews are, individually, no more responsible for that than we; while, regarded as a nation, they have a claim upon our gratitude for the precious deposit they have brought down to us. Whenever I meet one of this royal race, I cannot help sighing over their fallen fortunes, and the silent thought of my heart bears nothing more unkind than the burden of Pope Innocent's prayer: "May Almighty God take away the veil from your heart!"

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE HEBREW WITNESSES (CONTINUED).

#### WIDE CIRCULATION OF THE SACRED BOOKS.

"The priest-like father reads the sacred page,  
How Abram was the friend of God on high;  
Or Moses bade eternal warfare wage  
With Amalek's ungracious progeny;  
Or how the royal bard did groaning lie  
Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire;  
Or Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry;  
Or rapt Isaiah's wild seraphic fire;  
Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre."

*Cotter's Saturday Night.*

It has an important bearing on the authenticity of the Old Testament Scriptures, and still more on their integrity, to inquire how numerous were the copies, and how familiar were the people with their contents. We invite the reader very joyfully into this new field, and, supposing him to have the appetite of a literary man, will try to make his walk through it as agreeable as useful.

In the first place, note it down that the Jews had their judges and magistrates in every tribe and city,<sup>1</sup> whose office required of them to be well acquainted with the sacred records of the Law. This was a part of the constitution: "*Thou shalt appoint judges and magistrates in all thy gates, which the Lord thy God shall give thee, in all thy tribes; that they may judge the people with just judg-*

<sup>1</sup> Seven in every city, says Josephus. Antiq., b. iv, ch. viii, 14.

ment.”<sup>1</sup> Above all these presided the king, as chief magistrate of the nation. It is exceedingly edifying and not a little curious, to see what diligence was exacted of the king in the study of the Holy Law. “*After he is raised to the throne of his kingdom, he shall copy out to himself the Deuteronomy of this law in a volume, taking a copy of the priests of the Levitical tribe, and he shall have it with him, and shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, and keep his words and ceremonies, that are commanded in the law.*”<sup>2</sup>

If the same precept was not imposed, in so many words, on all the magistrates, the very nature of their office implied as much. Their profession was a learned as well as an honorable one. In the song of Deborah and Barac they are described as those

“That ride upon fair asses, and in judgment sit.”

It is very possible, and in accordance with the analogy of history, that some of them knew better how to sit on their donkeys, than to discriminate in a contested case; but a large number must have been really learned, especially in the Mosaic law, which was their only statutory rule of justice. Furthermore, a justice of the peace in New York would be counted for a poor one, if he were not furnished with, at least, a copy of the Revised Statutes. It is fair to suppose that the Hebrew magistrates had copies also, both for study and for reference. There is nothing in the state of the arts to forbid this supposition, even in the earliest times of the republic. It is true, the Law was originally written on tables of stone, but more pliable and handy, if less durable, materials were also in use. Amidst the monuments of Egypt, have been found documents written on the papyrus or byblus, as early certainly as the

<sup>1</sup> Deut. xvi, 18.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., xvii, 18, 19.

days of the Hebrew Legislator. In the Psalms we find plain mention made of books written in the form of volumes or scrolls, and in the prophecy of Jeremias, it is coupled with the use of ink, and probably also in the book of Numbers.<sup>1</sup>

There existed among the Hebrews, from the earliest times, a class of nobles called Ancients or Seniors, and of these one in each tribe was designated by the name of Prince. They governed the different tribes and divisions of the people according to a mild system introduced, like our common law, by custom. Sometimes also they met in a body, acting as councilmen for a city, or representatives of a tribe, and when all the princes of the tribes were assembled, they composed the Senate of the nation.<sup>2</sup> All these must be supposed, like the Judges, to have been more or less familiar with the Scriptures—their national records, and books of law.

We find frequent mention in Jewish history of genealogists, recorders, secretaries of the king, and of the temple, and of whole orders of scribes.<sup>3</sup> These certainly belonged to the learned classes, and it may easily be inferred that many of them were chiefly employed in making copies of the Sacred Scriptures. Esdras the Priest is called also “the scribe of the law of the God of heaven,” and “a ready scribe in the law of Moses.”<sup>4</sup>

Above all others the Levites, and of these still more

<sup>1</sup> Ps. xxxix, 8; Jer. xxxvi, 18; Numb. v, 23. See Dixon's *Introd.*, vol. 1, *Dissert.* 2, and Jahn, *Archæol. Bibl.*, § 87.

<sup>2</sup> Josephus paraphrases thus the words of Moses: “Aristocracy, and the way of living under it, is the best constitution, and may you never have an inclination to any other form of government,—for you need no supreme governor but God. But, if you shall desire a king, let him be one of your own nation, and let him do nothing without the High Priest, and the votes of the Senators.” *Antiq. b. iv*, chap. viii, 17.

<sup>3</sup> 4 K. xviii, 18, 37; 1 Par. ii, 55; 2 Par. xxxiv, 13.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Esdr. vii, 6, 21.

especially the priests of the house of Aaron, a numerous race,<sup>1</sup> were required to be learned in the Sacred Scriptures. The Israelites had nothing more at heart than that their priests should apply themselves almost exclusively to the study of the Law, and of the ceremonies of their religion. The houses of the priests, and the halls where they assembled, as also the courts of the Temple destined for the sittings of the Senate, were so many schools of sacred learning, where every one was permitted to enter who had questions of the Law to propound, or sought for directions in its administration. It is believed that schools of this kind were to be found, not only in the Temple, but in all the cities of the Levites.<sup>2</sup>

Besides the priests, the Jews had their prophets, in whom a profound knowledge of the Scriptures was of prime importance. When we speak of prophets here, we do not limit our thoughts to those extraordinary men sent from time to time by special mission from God, illuminated by supernatural sight, and speaking by inspiration. The word prophet, in Scripture language, is often used as synonymous with preacher, or sacred teacher, and of these we find a large class as early as the institution of the Jewish monarchy. They had even their academies or schools where they were trained in letters, in piety, psalmody, and every species of sacred learning. One of these schools was at Naioth in Ramatha, over which, in his day, Samuel presided. Another was situated in the field of Jericho, and another in Bethel is well known as the frequent asylum of the great prophets Elias and Eli-sæus. Of these two the former is believed to have had

<sup>1</sup> In the time of Josephus, so he tells us, there were four courses of priests, and above 5,000 men in each. *Contra Appion*, ii.

<sup>2</sup> Calmet, *Diss. sur les Ecoles des Hebreux*.

one more peculiarly his own on Mount Carmel.<sup>1</sup> Many others are mentioned in the sacred records, and the rabbins tell us there was one in every city. Here the people were free to come for counsel and instruction, especially on the Sabbath, and at the time of the new moon.<sup>2</sup>

"Bibles in the public schools!" exclaimed Sister Becky; "you'll make out next that they had Bible Societies."

"They undoubtedly had societies for studying the Bible," I replied.

To these schools of the prophets succeeded, in later times, those of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenians, who had their separate disciples, although they frequented the same synagogues. What we have said is sufficient to show how large was the class of learned men among the Jews, constituting in all ages so many qualified guardians of the integrity of Holy Writ. "Train up many disciples," is one of the three cardinal maxims ascribed to the sages of the Great Assembly,<sup>3</sup> a maxim which, even before their day, was far from being neglected, as I trust has been sufficiently shown.

But let it not be supposed that the knowledge of the Scriptures was confined to the ecclesiastics and the learned classes. On the contrary, not only were the Israelite multitude permitted, but they were even obliged to be instructed in them—men, women, children, and strangers.<sup>4</sup> "Our Legislator," says Josephus, "did not suffer the guilt of ignorance to go on without punishment, but demonstrated the Law to be the best and most necessary instruction of all others, permitting the people to leave off

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings, xix, 19, 20; 4 K. ii, 3, 5, iv, 25.

<sup>2</sup> 4 K. iv, 23.

<sup>3</sup> Raphall's Post-bibl. Hist., b. i, ch. iii.

<sup>4</sup> Dent. xxxi, 9, xxxii, 46, 47. See Calmet's Dict. "Etudes des Hebreux."



their other employments, and to assemble together for hearing of the Law, and learning of it exactly, and this not once or twice or oftener, but every week ; which thing all other legislators seem to have neglected.”<sup>1</sup>

Josaphat, a zealous king of Juda, adopted most energetic and efficient means to revive the knowledge of the Law among his people, who had fallen into idolatry in great numbers under some of his predecessors. He sent out several of his princes, Levites, and priests as missionary teachers, with the books of the Law in their hands: “*and they went about all the cities of Juda, and instructed the people.*”<sup>2</sup> Esdras did something very much like it after the return of the Jews from captivity. Surely, according to the spirit of the Hebrew institutions, everything was above board. The founder of a false religion and a fraudulent history could have nothing to hope for by exposing both to constant and general scrutiny.

In addition to all that has been said to show the wide publication of the Scriptures among the Israelites, we have still a word in reserve with regard to the family Bible.

“Family Bibles, too. My gracious !”

“Hush ! Becky.”

It was a duty imposed upon Hebrew parents by the Mosaic Law, and repeatedly insisted on, that they should instruct their children both in the history of their nation and the precepts of their religion.<sup>3</sup> The contents of the Scriptures were thus made known to the Israelites from their very childhood, in proportion to their capacities for receiving instruction, and the qualifications of their parents to instruct them. But a large body of fathers of

<sup>1</sup> Against Appion, b. ii. See also St. Luke, iv, 16, 17. Acts xiii, 15, 27.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Par. xvii, 7 ; 2 Esdr. viii.

<sup>3</sup> Deut. xxxii, 46, 47.

families in Israel were learned, as we have seen, and obliged by their profession to the study of the Scriptures. Others again, being wealthy and furnished with every means of education, would study them out of piety, for the love of learning, or because the knowledge of their sacred law and history was necessary to their hopes of preferment in the commonwealth.<sup>1</sup> All these would most naturally be anxious to have their children as familiar with the Scriptures as themselves. It does not therefore seem too bold to infer the existence here and there of the family Bible, nor would it, we think, be at all inapt to apply to many an ancient Hebrew homestead the charming description given by Burns of a Scotch cotter's Saturday night :

“ The cheerful supper done, wi' serious face,  
They round the ingle form a circle wide ;  
The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,  
The big ha' Bible, ance his father's pride,  
His bonnet reverently laid aside.”

The same inference may be drawn from the fact that, by the constitution of their republic, the Jews were obliged to preserve their genealogies, on the verification of which depended all the civil and religious privileges attached to the nation, the tribe, and the family of each. Not only their rights of citizenship, and the pretensions of some of them to the priesthood and the service of the Temple, but the lawfulness of their marriages, and the very title to their estates, depended on the purity of their Hebrew blood, and the particular channel by which it flowed down to them from its patriarchal fountain. Now these gene-

<sup>1</sup> “ Not a few of the Hebrews knew how to read and write,” says Jahn, speaking of the Mosaic age, “ although very many also were illiterate.”—*Archaeol. Bibl.*

“ The more wealthy ones (in the times of the kings at least) had not only their private notaries, but readers also.”—*Ibid.*

alogies, in all the main branches, were to be found spread out in the most authoritative form over the pages of their sacred annals, from the books of Moses down. If an Israelite of the olden time could reappear to examine one of our modern Bibles, he would laugh at the lean materials which go to make up our brief tables of "Family Record." And moreover, it would seem to him as much out of place there, as would to you, my merry reader, the name of Obadiah Perkins among the dynasties of Egypt, carved on a monument with a jack knife.

The point we wish to establish in this chapter, may be made out in another way.

The Old Testament Scriptures have been transmitted to us from an early age by separate and independent nations, and also in different versions, or translations, which is another proof of their wide publication, and therefore an additional assurance of their authenticity and integrity. At the threshold of this argument, we beg leave to introduce to our reader a venerable monument of antiquity, which goes by the name of the Samaritan Pentateuch, with a short notice of its history.

From the time of King Roboam, the son and successor of the great Solomon, there existed in Palestine two different nations, each claiming Hebrew origin, and each preserving the same books of Moses, in different texts or characters. The Hebrew Bible, so called, is Hebrew in so far as the language is concerned; but the alphabetical characters in which we find it written are not the same as those employed by the Hebrews before the Babylonish captivity. They are Chaldaic, a form of letters adopted, no doubt, by the Jews from their Chaldean conquerors, and retained ever since. The Samaritan Pentateuch, on the contrary, remains to this day in the original Hebrew or Phœnician characters.

These Samaritans, it must be remembered, were descendants of those ten tribes of Israelites which separated from the rest under Jeroboam, about a thousand years before Christ, and formed a distinct kingdom, of which the capital was Samaria. They, of course, were not included in that Babylonian conquest which destroyed the sister kingdom of Juda, for they had been themselves conquered and carried into captivity previous to this by the Assyrians under Salmanazar. Some of them however, it is believed, always remained unmolested in their own country, to whom were added a colony of heathen people from Cutha sent by the king of Assyria to replace the captives. These mingled together and formed a mongrel race called Samaritans, and sometimes Cutheans.

After the arrival of these colonists in Samaria, one of the priests, who had been carried away captive into Assyria, was sent back by order of Assaradon, the Assyrian king, to teach the "*ordinances of the God of the land.*" Instructed by him they worshipped indeed the true God, but nevertheless without thoroughly abandoning their heathen superstitions.<sup>1</sup> Through this priest, in all probability, they received their copy of the Pentateuch, which they have carefully preserved until the present day.

A perpetual enmity existed between the Jews and Samaritans, the former very justly regarding the latter as contaminated both in blood and religion. The mutual antipathy rose to the highest pitch when, in the time of the prophet Nehemias, the Samaritans built a separate temple for themselves on Mount Garizim, near Sichem, their capital, for which they claimed a superior sanctity to that of Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> This new temple, and the lax observance

<sup>1</sup> More of their early history may be seen in 4 Kings, xvii; 1 Esdras, iv; and in Josephus.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph. Antiq. of the Jews, b. xi, ch. viii.

which prevailed there, attracted to Samaria a large number of settlers from Judea, bringing to its inhabitants a new infusion of Jewish blood. The partial consanguinity thus established did not serve to sweeten the intercourse between the two nations, nor indeed was it for the good of religion that any intimacy should grow up between them. "*There are two nations,*" says the son of Sirach, "*which my soul abhorreth, and the third is no nation which I hate; they that sit on Mount Seir, and the Philistines, and the foolish people that dwell in Sichem.*"

In the reign of King Ptolemy Philometor, the dispute waxed so warm that, to preserve the public peace, the rival nations were summoned to present their claims before the royal tribunal. "This grand suit," to borrow the triumphant language of an American Rabbi, "in which the litigants, as well as the judge, fully recognized the authenticity and truthfulness of the five books of Moses, was eventually and solemnly decided in favor of Jerusalem, and its ancient and most holy temple."<sup>1</sup>

The conclusion of all this is simple and easy. In the first place, we have established a still wider publication of the Scriptures, at least of the books of Moses; and secondly, we have found two separate streams of tradition, which bring them down to us from very early times, and guarantee their integrity. In fact, although there are various discrepancies between the two copies in things of little importance, they agree substantially in almost every place.<sup>2</sup> This could never be by any collusion between the two races. Their mutual hatred would be a sufficient guarantee, were it otherwise possible.

But now arises the question: How far back does this guarantee extend? In other words, when did the Samar-

<sup>1</sup> Raphall's Post-bibl. Hist., vol. i, chap. vii.

<sup>2</sup> Dixon's Introd., vol. i, ch. ii.

itans become possessed of this their copy of the Pentateuch ?

Only two answers can be given which carry with them any probability. Either it was preserved by that remnant of the ten tribes which escaped the Assyrian captivity, remaining in their own land, or it was brought back to Samaria by that captive priest who was sent, as we have related, to instruct the colonists in the ancient worship of the land. Indeed, both suppositions may be true, but in either case we are carried back to that remote period when the Hebrews were separated into two distinct kingdoms of Juda and Israel, nearly one thousand years before the Christian era.<sup>1</sup>

The Samaritan Pentateuch of which we have been speaking, gave birth somewhat later to a second, a version or translation, and which must not be confounded with it. The mother copy is purely Hebrew, while the version is in a new dialect, the Samaritan language proper, compounded of Hebrew and Chaldaic. This dialect sprang naturally out of the intercourse of the Chaldean settlers in Samaria, and the remnant of the ten tribes which they found remaining there. Here then is the opening of a new vein in that rich mine that we have sprung already ; but for fear of wearying our reader, we will not stop to explore it. We bid farewell now to our Samaritan friends. A few families of them are still found clustered near the site of their ruined temple. They, like the Jews, are looking for the advent of the Messias. Dreamers!—that advent has already taken place, and they remain clinging to their

<sup>1</sup> The fact of the sending of the priest back from Assyria to instruct the people, which he could not do without this Book, where all the laws and ceremonies were to be found, and also the more ancient and peculiar character of its alphabet, forbid the supposition that the Samaritan Pentateuch was borrowed from the rival nation of the Jews.

leafless vine, like forgotten grapes when the harvest is over.

Another strong witness to the wide dissemination of the Old Testament scriptures, in early times, is that Greek version, still existing, of the Old Testament, known by the name of the Septuagint. This translation was made some three hundred years before Christ. It was familiarly known to the early Fathers, and is evidently the one employed by the sacred writers of the New Testament, since, where any discrepancies exist between it and the Hebrew, they accord with the former.

A long account of the origin of this version is given by an ancient writer named Aristeas, and repeated by Josephus in his *Antiquities*.<sup>1</sup> This account is in abridgment as follows:

When Demetrius Phalerius was librarian to King Ptolemy Philadelphus at Alexandria, and had collected a great many books for the royal library, he suggested to the king that the laws of the Jews were very deserving of a place in it, but that they should first be translated from the Hebrew. The king accordingly sent letters to Jerusalem, addressed to the high priest Eleazar, requesting him to send the sacred Book, and along with it men who were able to make a translation of it into Greek. Eleazar did so. The interpreters, to the number of seventy-two, were kindly received by Ptolemy, who had them conducted to the island of Pharos, where a house was fitted up for them suitable to their purpose. Here they entered upon their task, dividing the labor among them, and it was determined that, if any difficulty should occur, they would all discuss it together. As the translation of each part was finally settled and committed to writing, it was handed to Demetrius, who had it transcribed by amanu-

<sup>1</sup> Book xii, ch. ii.

enses. The work when concluded was read in the assembly of the Jews at Alexandria, and approved of.

Philo the Jew, in his *Life of Moses*, St. Justin Martyr, and St. Epiphanius, add to this account miraculous circumstances which, if true, would go to prove not merely the accuracy but the inspiration of this celebrated version; and credit is given to these circumstances, and to the idea of a divine direction in the process of translation, by the Talmud and other rabbinical writings.<sup>1</sup> It is of little consequence, however, to our present argument. We are only concerned here to establish the antiquity of the Septuagint, and the public manner in which the translation was made.

It is a question whether all of the Old Testament books, as we find them now in the Septuagint, were translated by the original interpreters under Ptolemy, or whether some were added a while afterward. St. Jerome says that Aristeas, Josephus, and all the schools of the Jews assert that the Seventy translated only the five books of Moses. The manner of speaking of the Fathers, and ancient writers of the Church generally, appears to be decidedly in favor of the contrary opinion, which says they translated all that required translation. This is sustained also by the testimony of Aristobulus, a Jew, who lived about two hundred years before Christ. His account, as given by Eusebius, is that "the entire interpretation of the Law was made in the time of a king surnamed Philadelphus." And, in reality, there is no reason why Ptolemy would not have wished for and procured a version of the other books, as well as those of Moses.<sup>2</sup>

The Hellenist Jews, that is, those of Egypt and other countries where the Greek was spoken, held this version

<sup>1</sup> Raphall's *Post-Bibl. Hist.*, vol. i. ch. iii.

<sup>2</sup> Dixon's *Introd.*, vol. i, chap. iii.



in the highest veneration, uniformly believing its translators to have been inspired. According to Philo Judæus they were accustomed, up to his time, to repair every year to the island of Pharos, where they kept a festival in its memory. About the year 550, in the time of the emperor Justinian, we find that they gave great offence to the other Jews by continuing to use it in their synagogues. So great the excitement grew that the dispute was only settled by a constitution of the emperor, still extant (Novel. 146), in which he decides in favor of the Hellenists, declaring that they shall have full liberty to use their own version in the synagogue.<sup>1</sup>

In this version also the early Christian Church was accustomed to read the Scriptures, and it is the one used in the Greek Church of our day. The Latin Vulgate, now used and authorized by the Catholic Church, is the offspring of the Septuagint, although carefully collated with the Hebrew text, and corrected.

Here we have another, and most palpable instance of the wide dissemination of these sacred Books long before the Christian era. Here again we have two rival versions, guarded and transmitted for two thousand years and more by separate channels of tradition; which is for us a new pledge of the antiquity of both; and by comparing the two we find that nothing has happened since their separate existence to mar their integrity.

<sup>1</sup> Dixon's Introd., vol. i, chap. iii.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE HEBREW WITNESSES (CONTINUED).

#### A FAMILY OF SACRED BOOKS.

"Whence but from Heaven could men, unskilled in arts,  
In several ages born, in several parts,  
Weave such agreeing truths?"—*Religio Laici.*

It must be apparent to every candid mind that has followed us through the preceding pages, that our argument from tradition applies to each and every book which that tradition includes. If, for instance, the reasoning of the two last chapters is admitted, it establishes the authenticity of all the books included in the ancient Hebrew canon of inspired Scripture, or which the common tradition of that nation has received as authentic history, and deposited as such in the lap of Christianity.

From this it follows that we remain excused from the necessity of bringing in a separate chain of arguments for each book. Still less can we be expected to arrange and exhibit the different dates of the several books, and the names of the different authors. When we have proved them to be genuine by the seal of a great nation, the reader is bound to accept them, as written by the author whose name they bear, and belonging to the epoch they pretend to. If he is curious to be acquainted with these things in detail, we recommend him with all our heart to a careful study of the books.

It must not be supposed that the number of distinct writings contained in the Hebrew Bible is an embarrassment to our argument. On the contrary, it fortifies it most wonderfully, since the impossibility of forgery or fraud increases with the number of documents requiring to be forged or foisted upon the nation.

There are some skeptical people, who look upon the long series of the Old Testament scriptures, as constituting a long array of difficulties, which stand in our way like so many ramparts, each one to be carried by a separate assault; whereas, on the contrary, their number only makes our task the easier. If—so stands our argument—if it is impossible to impose upon a nation one forged document as a public and familiar record, how utterly impossible to make them accept a whole family of books, of different dates, ranging backward from a few years to a thousand and more! This argument grows still stronger when we examine the books more closely, to see what they are, and what relation they bear to each other.

If we turn over the leaves of the Bible with some attention, we find there, what the astronomer finds in the sky, a law of unity in a world of variety. Such a unity is it, however, and such a variety, that each equally renders imposture impossible. There is a variety of books so remarkable, that no one man, or conspiracy of men, could suffice to compose them. There is a unity so perfect that they cannot be separated, each leaning on the others like a group of sisters.

But first, this variety—in what does it consist, and what conclusions result to the benefit of our argument?

The various books composing the Old Testament are so diverse in subject matter, in method, and in style that, looking at this alone, it becomes absurd to ascribe them to one authorship, or to one epoch. We find among them

statute books—civil, religious, and ceremonial; books of ethics, of prophecy and of psalmody; historical annals, journals, chronicles, biographies; and sacred poems also—dramatic, prophetic, and mystic. This wonderful variety can scarcely be exhibited in a more striking or agreeable manner, than by giving the reader a translation of that beautiful synopsis contained in St. Jerome's epistle to Paulinus. St. Jerome's design, which was quite different from ours, led him to bring out into principal relief the prophetic and typical character of the Old Testament, as bearing in its bosom the germs and promise of the Gospel. Nevertheless, it will answer our purpose well enough. Let us now be silent, while this blessed bee of the Scriptures shakes the honey from his wings!

"Foremost and most conspicuous GENESIS opens, in which is written the creation of the world, the origin of the human race, the division of the earth, the confusion of tongues and nations, until the Hebrew exodus.

"Then EXODUS is before us, with the ten plagues, with the decalogue, and so many precepts, mystic and divine.

"Next follows the book of LEVITICUS, where in every sacrifice, ay, almost every syllable, in Aaron's vestments, in the whole order of Levites, celestial mysteries are breathing.

"Now NUMBERS, with the mustering of the tribes, the prophecy of Balaam, and the forty years' wandering in the wilderness.

"DEUTERONOMY, the second Law, is the prototype of the Gospel. For have we not the former law again? And yet all the old things here are new. Hitherto—Moses, and the five books of the Pentateuch, the very five words concerning which the Apostle glories that he loves to speak them in the Church.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xiv, 19.

“Hail JOB, model of patience! What wonders are not in this book? He begins in prose, then glides into measure, and ends with prose again. Here all the rules of dialectics are determined—proposition, assumption, confirmation, conclusion. Every word in him is full of meaning, and (to say nothing of the rest) he prophesies of the resurrection of the body in such a manner, that never any one wrote of it more plainly or more accurately. ‘I know,’ he says, ‘that my Redeemer liveth, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth, and I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God, whom I myself shall see, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. This my hope is laid up in my bosom.’

“I come to JESUS (JOSUE) the son of Nave, a type of the Lord in his name, and in his actions. He passes over Jordan, overturns the hostile kingdoms, portions out the land to the victorious people, and, wherever he passes, by cities, hamlets, mountains, rivers, brooks, and borders, maps out the spiritual kingdoms of the heavenly Jerusalem.

“In the book of the JUDGES, as many types are presented as there are princes that rule the people.

“RUTH, the Moabitess, fulfils that prophecy which says: ‘Send forth, O Lord, the Lamb, the ruler of the earth, from Petra of the desert to the mount of the daughter of Sion.’

“SAMUEL shows forth the abolition of the Old Law in the death of Heli and the slaying of Saul. In Sadoc and David, also, he testifies to the mysteries of the new priesthood and the new dominion.

“MALACHIM, that is, the third and fourth books of the kings, describes the kingdoms of Juda and Israel from Solomon to Jechonias, and from Jeroboam the son of Nabat to Osee, who was led captive into Assyria. If you consider the history alone, the narrative is simple. If you

look in the words for their hidden sense, the small number of the elect is there, and the wars of the heretics against the Church.

“The twelve prophets, compressed into the limits of a volume, contain much more in type and figure than is sounded in words.

“OSEE often speaks of Ephraim, Samaria, Joseph, Jezrahel, the wife and children of fornications, and how the adulterous wife, shut up in the marriage chamber, sits for a long while as a widow in mourning habit, wailing for the return of her husband.

“JOEL, the son of Phatuel, describes the land of the ten tribes consumed by the canker-worm, the brucus, the locust, and the devastating mildew; and (after the overthrow of the former people) the effusion of the Holy Ghost upon the servants and handmaids of God, that is, upon the 120 names of those that believe, in the coenacle of Sion; which 120, increasing gradually and by addition from one to fifteen, make up that number of 15 graduals<sup>1</sup> mystically contained in the Psalter.

“The shepherd Amos, a rustic and a painter of rustic manners, cannot be explained in a few words. For who can rightly express the three and four crimes of Damascus, of Gaza, of Tyre, of Idumea, of the sons of Ammon and of Moab, and in the seventh place and the eighth—of Juda and Israel? He speaks to the fat kine which are in the mountains of Samaria, and testifies of the ruin about to fall on the elder and the latter house. It is he who sees the fable of the locust, and the Lord standing upon a plastered (or adamantine) wall, and the fruit hook drawing down

<sup>1</sup> The 15 gradual psalms, beginning with the 119th and closing with the 138d. They are so called, because it was the custom of the Israelites to sing them while ascending the steps, or *degrees* of the temple. They are appointed in the Roman Breviary for the Wednesdays in Lent.

punishment upon sinners, and the famine in the land—not the hunger for bread, nor the thirst for water, but hunger and thirst to hear the word of God.

“ABDIAS, which signifies the servant of God, thunders against Edom, that bloody and worldly man, who, always envious of his brother Jacob, smites him with a spiritual spear.

“JONAS, beautiful dove, prefigures by his shipwreck the passion of our Lord, recalls the world to penance, and announces salvation to the Gentiles, represented by Nineveh.

“MICHEAS of Morasti, coheir of Christ, announces the devastation of the robber’s daughter, and lays siege against her, because she had struck the cheek of the judge of Israel.

“NAHUM, world’s comforter, denounces the city of blood, and after her overthrow he says: ‘Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings and that preacheth peace.’

“HABACUC, strong and resolute wrestler, stands upon his watch, and plants his foot upon the tower, that he may contemplate Christ upon the cross, while he says: ‘His glory hath covered the heavens, and the earth is full of his praise. His brightness shall be as the light; horns are in his hands; there is his strength hid.’

“SOPHONIAS, the sentinel and confidant of the secrets of God, hears a cry at the Fishgate, and a howl from the Second, and a destruction from the hills. He tells also of the howling of the inhabitants of Maktesh, because all the people of Canaan were hush, and all that wrapped themselves in silver were cut off.

“AGGEUS, festive and joyful, sows in tears that he may reap in joy. He builds the ruined temple, and introduces God the Father, who says: ‘Yet one little while,

and I will move heaven, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land, and I will move all nations, and the Desired of all nations shall come."

"ZACHARIAS, ever mindful of his Lord, and manifold in prophecy, sees Jesus clothed in soiled garments; and the stone of seven eyes; and the golden candlestick—as many lights, so many eyes; and the two olive trees, at the left of the lamp, and on the right. And after the vision of the horses, black, red, white, and spotted, and the broken chariots out of Ephraim, and the horses out of Jerusalem, he prophesies, announcing the coming of the King, poor, and riding upon a colt the foal of an ass.

"MALACHIAS plainly, and as closing the oracles of the Prophets, tells of the rejection of Israel, and the calling of the Gentiles: 'I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will not receive a gift of your hand; for, from the rising of the sun, even to the going down, my name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation.'

"ISAIAH, JEREMIAS, EZECHIEL, AND DANIEL—who is able either to fathom, or to explain these? The first seems to me to have woven, not a prophecy, but rather a gospel. The second links together the hazel rod and the boiling caldron from the face of the north, and the leopard divested of his colors, and a fourfold alphabet in various verse. The third, in the beginning, and at the end, has so many mysteries involved, that among the Hebrews these parts might not be read before the age of thirty. The fourth, however, who is also the latest of the four prophets, familiar with the secrets of time, and eager student of the entire world,<sup>1</sup> proclaims in clearest terms

<sup>1</sup> "*Temporum conscius, et totius mundi φιλιστωρ.*" It is hard to translate these terms satisfactorily into English. Baron Humboldt



the Stone cut out of the mountain without hands, which is to break in pieces all the kingdoms.

“DAVID is our Simonides, our Pindar and Alcaeus, our Flaccus too, and Catullus, and Serenus. He sings of Christ upon the lyre, and the harp of ten strings, and hails him rising from the dead.

“SOLOMON, a lover of peace and beloved by the Lord, moralizes, teaches nature, joins the Church and Christ together, and sings the sweet marriage song of their sacred nuptials.

“ESTHER, as type of the Church, delivers the people from their peril, and Aman being slain (who signifies iniquity) transmits to posterity the festival and holiday.

“The book of PARALIPOMENON, that is, the supplement to the earlier records, is such a work and of so great value that, if ever one dreamed of pretending to a knowledge of the Scriptures without it, let him laugh at his own folly. In every word and expression some point omitted in the Book of Kings is touched upon ; and innumerable questions belonging to the Gospel are explained.

“ESDRAS AND NEHEMIAS, to wit, the helper and the comforter from the Lord, are joined in one volume. They restore the Temple, and build up the walls of the city ; and all that multitude of people returning to their fatherland, the description of the priests, the Levites, Israel, the proselytes, and the work on the walls distributed among the several families, present one meaning on the rind, but bear another in the core.”

“You see how I am ravished with the love of the Scriptures, and so have transgressed the limits of a letter ; and yet I have not done all I would. We have learned

would most likely have rendered the latter—“Ardent lover of the Cosmos ;” but the words mean far more than was ever dreamed of in his sentimental materialism.

nothing but this—how much we need to know, and ought to desire to know; so that we too may exclaim: ‘My soul hath covetously longed for thy justifications, at all times.’ For the rest, that saying of Socrates is fulfilled in us, ‘This alone I know, that I know nothing.’”

We leave this catalogue of books in the hands of our reader. It is only a sketch, charmingly drawn indeed, but yet meagrely, since it presents them in a single point of view—in their typical or mystical character, as pointing forward to the Christian Church and Gospel. It suffices nevertheless for our purpose, which is simply to show what variety reigns in this great volume of sacred writings. A few words more will finish what we have to say on this point.

There is also a variety of style. In judging of this, one not familiar with the original language of the Old Testament is necessarily restricted to certain strong points of difference, which are maintained even in translations, and arise from the nature of the several subjects treated. Thus history, prophecy, psalmody, and ethics have each a natural style of their own, and it would be a sorry translation indeed which should fail to preserve these in some measure. Even the individual characteristics of the authors are not altogether lost by translation. Of such diversities as these we leave the intelligent reader to judge for himself, by a perusal of the books, or from his recollection of them.<sup>1</sup> There is however a *style* to which we would particularly direct the attention of our reader—one independent both of the author and of his subject, and inherent in the language itself—a style which simply marks the age

<sup>1</sup> We suppose him, of course, too well instructed to imagine that Moses and the Prophets used *hath* for *has*, *doth* for *does*, *yea* for *yes*, and *verily* for *truly*, or that such old-fashioned forms of English are characteristic signs of an inspired style.

of a language, and its stage of development. With the lapse of time some words become obsolete, other new ones are introduced, new forms of expression also are adopted, and thus from this process of change and growth, the critical scholar may form a shrewd judgment of the age of a document, by the study of its style. In this way, the different epochs at which Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Scott wrote are broadly marked by the words and expressions which they employ. In a nation like the Jews, who had little commerce with the rest of the world, and did not allow the intermingling of their blood with strangers, the change would be far less visible in the same space of time; but biblical scholars have noted such change and growth in the Hebrew. Many new forms of expression unknown to the older books are found in the Psalms, and other writings of the days of David and Solomon, and later on; and so again, many words were employed by Moses and the early writers which dropped out of use in later times. Moreover, the same words are found to have undergone changes with the lapse of years. The Pentateuch shows a much greater poverty of words than the other books, and yet it is worthy of remark that the style of Moses is on the whole superior to that of the other writers, more adorned and elevated in the metrical parts, clearer and choicer in the prose, as might be expected from one so learned and cultivated, a nursling of the royal palace of Egypt.<sup>1</sup>

We now leave our reader to his own reflection and good sense to decide whether all this vast variety of books, of matter, and of style, could have been composed by any one man or combination of men, and smuggled in upon the Jewish people unawares. If he says, Yes—his faith is great, and we Christians are infidels to him. Oh! what faith it requires to disbelieve!

<sup>1</sup> See Jahn's Introd. to the Pent.

The unity (we confine ourselves here, for brevity's sake, to historical unity) which reigns throughout the sacred volume is no less wonderful than its variety. It is like that of the solar system, where the planets all suppose the existence of the sun, and the sun sits like a Patriarch among his planets. The Pentateuch, consisting of the original books of the Law, is the sun of the Bible system, to which all the other books refer as their centre of motion, while, deprived of them, the Pentateuch would be an unaccountable wonder. It would be like some lost star, separated from the universe of worlds, astray in the wilderness of space, and revolving desolately on its own axis. We could only stand and gaze upon it as on a huge aerolite fallen by chance into a world where it does not belong, and has no purpose to fulfil. The subsequent books, too, all follow a law of mutual dependence, like sister planets in the sky. If one of these were wanting, especially one of the historical books, a gap would exist in Hebrew history, like that noticed in our solar system before the discovery of Neptune; and, even although tradition were silent on the subject, we should know, by the place left vacant, that a book was missing.

On the contrary, we find the sacred history in every essential respect both harmonious and complete, each epoch pointing backward to an earlier, and each book testifying to its predecessors, so that taken together they form a continuous and complete chain—

“The chain of ages, which maintains  
Their obvious correspondence, and unites  
Most distant periods in one blest design.”<sup>1</sup>

Thus, for instance the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Temple, narrated by Esdras, supposes the existence of a

<sup>1</sup> Young's Night Thoughts, vii.

former city and temple, and carries us back beyond the Babylonian captivity to the two kingdoms of Juda and Israel, and to the magnificent Temple of Solomon, and to David the founder of Jerusalem, for the account of which we are indebted to the Paralipomenon and books of the Kings. The peaceful and prosperous days of Solomon could only be purchased by previous wars and victories. We find them in the Judges and Josue. The conquest of Canaan, recorded in these books, supposes the immigration of the Israelites into that country from some other. We have the history of it in Exodus, a long and perilous march from Egypt through the Arabian desert. The Egyptian bondage must now be accounted for. Were the Hebrews the original people of Egypt conquered and enslaved by invaders, or were they brought there as captives from foreign wars? No, neither; for we read in Genesis that they were peaceful immigrants, first invited to a settlement in Egypt by fair promises, then persecuted and enslaved by the native Egyptian party, and finally forced to seek liberty, and freedom of worship elsewhere. We are then introduced to the beautiful story of Joseph and his brethren, the origin of the twelve tribes in these Patriarchs, and in the noble loins of Abraham, the shepherd king, himself an emigrant to Canaan, and a native of Chaldea.

Such is the history of the Jews. Is it the true one, or are they left without a true one? If it is a true history, the monuments of it are found in these sacred books of their nation. They have no other. If these books—or any of them—are accepted as such, which one is it allowable to reject? Which one is not stamped by the same seal of national tradition? Which one does not occupy its proper place in the series? Shall we reject any of those books which constitute the annals of the republic?

The history then is shattered and sundered. Shall we reject the prophetic books? But the historical too testify in every part to the prophets, and themselves abound in prophecies. In fine, with all their wonderful compass of subject and variety of composition, their unity of succession and design is complete.

The unity of the Hebrew Scriptures is exhibited in still another form, namely, that of interquotation, or reference of one to the contents of another. By this, not only their relative antiquity is easily discernible from their own testimony, each book being silent in regard to all that follow it, and borrowing freely from its predecessors; but, what is of more consequence to our present argument, they stand together thus in a serried phalanx, and assert in a body their common authenticity. They must stand or fall together. If we accept the series, we must refuse none; if we accept one, we must accept all.

Deprived of its connections, each book would be like a section of a river, without outlet or fountain; or like one of those misshapen and mutilated comets, which sometimes sweep through our heavens with nothing but a tail, and at other times burst in upon us all head and hair.

Here we end our chapter. When the geographer has measured the base of a mountain, and taken the elevation of its summit, he is entitled to put it down upon his map; others may come when they list to explore all its peaks and ravines. We have done the same with our subject. We have surveyed the entire area of the Jewish Scriptures with our arguments from tradition. We have run our line and driven our stakes around the whole. Those, who would explore more in detail, may step over the landmarks we have drawn. They will find more than we have time to put on paper; but, if our measurement has been well made, they will find nothing within the area to disturb our lines.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### PROOFS FROM HEBREW FESTIVALS AND CEREMONIES.

“ Morem ritusque sacrorum  
Adjiciam.” *Æneid.*

THE existence of the Jews is not merely a thing of history; it is a present fact. Although dispersed among the nations of the earth, they still form a distinct race, being held together principally by the bond of religion. They have at least seventy religious congregations in the United States, and about fifty regular synagogues. On Saturday, which is their sabbath, you will find them in any of our large cities assembled together for religious worship, and you may enter freely and witness their ceremonies. And, my friend, if you can visit one of these synagogues, as we have done, see them remove their shoes at the door, see them sit clothed in sackcloth, listen to the reading of the Law, watch the solemn procession as they go to deposit their sacred Books in the Ark—if you can do this without feeling a sensation of religious awe creep over you, as if you had been suddenly transported to the Holy Land, and phantom worshippers of bygone ages had risen from their graves to reënact the scenes of Sacred History—why, then your heart is less impressible than ours, or you have read the Scriptures less. For our part, all that took place seemed like some sacred drama, in whose shifting scenes ages are spanned over in compass of a moment. At one time, when the reading

the Law commenced, and the ministers of the synagogue who stood in the tribune seemed, to our inexperienced eyes, to be discussing together the import of what they read, we looked on with suppressed breath, as if at any moment the august form of Jesus might ascend the platform to interpret, as He did once in the synagogue of Nazareth. St. Luke gives the account.

“And He rose up to read; and the Book of Isaias the Prophet was delivered unto Him. And as He unfolded the book, He found the place where it was written: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; wherefore he hath anointed me, he hath sent me to preach the Gospel to the poor, to heal the contrite of heart, to preach deliverance to the captives, and sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of reward. And when He had folded the book, He restored it to the minister and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them: This day is fulfilled this scripture in your ears.”<sup>1</sup>

By and by they formed a procession, and carried the inspired Roll to deposit it in the Ark. This was a shifting of the scene, and we were carried back nearly two thousand years to the days of the great Lawgiver, and to a high hill on the skirts of the Arabian desert, where, looking down with the affrighted Moabites, we saw the hosts of Israel pass by beneath with songs and banners, on their march to the Land of Promise.

Do not smile, reader! There was truth in this illusion. Here they are, these countrymen of our Saviour, still holding their synagogues in our midst. Here they are, these children of Israel, still marching on, a throng of wanderers without a country. Aaron the priest is dead, but the

<sup>1</sup> St. Luke iv, 16.



prophet Moses still marches at their head. Their sacrifices are gone these eighteen hundred years, but they still keep the other religious institutions of their great Law-giver, and observe his festivals as they have always done—as they did in his day, as they did in the time of the Judges, as they did under their Kings, as they did in the captivity, as they did under their Grecian and Roman conquerors, as they did in the time of Christ, as they did in that brightest era that ever shone upon their exile when Maimonides flourished at the court of the great Saladin, and as they did two hundred years ago when the Rabbi Leo de Modena wrote on the “Ceremonies and Customs of the Jews.”

Now, the origin of these Feasts and Ceremonies is accounted for minutely and circumstantially in the Old Testament, and only there, while the fact of their present and immemorial observance affords testimony of the strongest kind to the authenticity and accuracy of the record.

In the 12th chapter of Exodus, we have the history of the institution of the Passover, a yearly festival in which a lamb was slain and eaten in the houses of the Hebrews, in commemoration of the miraculous exodus of their ancestors from Egypt, and of the protection extended to each Hebrew family in that scourge which destroyed all the first-born of the Egyptians. There is no fact in history more certain than the observance of this festival from the earliest age of their history until the present day. No one can deny that it is observed now. We see the yearly announcement of it in our city journals, and frequently with an explanation of its origin, and mode of celebration; and we Christians commemorate the same events in our Easter season, together with other sacred mysteries of which the original Passover was only a foretoken. That this observance has been constant on the part of both Jews

and Christians during the Christian era is matter of the plainest history. As to the former, the skeptic may consult the first Jew he meets as witness to their present practice, and we refer him to Leo of Modena, a writer already cited of the 17th century, and to Josephus, who carries us back to the date of the destruction of the Temple and the dispersion of the race. Philo, an Alexandrian Jew, who wrote before this catastrophe, has much to say about the Passover, and shows us the Jews in the faithful observance of the festival in his day. Here we have this plain fact before us: how is it to be accounted for? How and when did this feast originate, and what was the cause or occasion of its institution?

There is only one answer to the question, and that is given in the Pentateuch of Moses, to which all subsequent writers refer. No other history has ever pretended to give any different account, while that in the Old Testament is clear and circumstantial, not leaping over great chasms of time and sheltering itself against contradiction in the dim twilight of tradition, but giving in simple detail the narrative of its institution and of all the actors therein, and bringing down to comparatively modern times the evidences of its continued observance interwoven with the whole subsequent history of the nation. The Passover, therefore, has not the slightest resemblance to those festivals which the Heathen celebrated in memory of fabulous events. The latter were not instituted at the supposed time when the events happened, nor pretended to be, while, on the contrary, the very Hebrews who in Egypt sprinkled their door posts with the blood of the slain lamb, that the Angel of Death might pass their doors, and who pressed their first-born with trembling joy to their bosoms, while through the shuddering night the wail of Egyptian mothers was borne to their ears—these were the

first celebrators of the Passover, and they transmitted the festival to their posterity, with a full history of all the events that gave rise to it. We not only meet with frequent allusions to the feast in the sacred writers, but find the people engaged in its celebration throughout the course of their history—in the wilderness, during their wars with the Canaanites, in the times of the Kings, after their return from Babylon under Esdras,<sup>1</sup> in the days of our Saviour on earth, and so on to the present day; and now still both Jews and Christians, albeit with different rites and discordant intelligence, are guided by the same word of command that comes sounding down the long track of thirty-three centuries: "This day shall be for a memorial to you, and you shall keep it a feast to the Lord in your generations with an everlasting observance."<sup>2</sup> The Jews, as far as their straitened circumstances will permit, keep the Passover in its original form, while we Christians, exchanging the type for the glad reality, respond to the precept in the spirit of our Easter anthem: "Christ our Passover is sacrificed; therefore let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven, but with unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."<sup>3</sup>

And now, if any one is still skeptical on this subject, we beg leave to submit to him the following questions:

Is it true, or is it not, that this Hebrew race observe and always have observed the festival of the Passover, so far as we can trace their history back into antiquity? If not, at what time did it commence?

Is the account of its institution, as we find it in the Old Testament, the true one? If not, is there any other, and what is it?

<sup>1</sup> Exod. xii; Numb. ix, 5; Jos. v, 10; 2 K. xxiii, 22; 2 Chron. xxx, 15; Esd. vi, 20; John ii, 13, xviii, 28.

<sup>2</sup> Exod. xii, 14.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. v, 8.

Do the Jews themselves give this account of it? Do you know of any time in their history when they gave a different one, or professed ignorance of its origin?

Was it possible, think you, for any one at any time to impose this festival upon the whole nation, as commemorative of events of which they knew nothing until then?

Was it also possible, at the same time, to introduce into their minds the delusion that this thing was nothing new, but an old observance which had come down to them by uninterrupted tradition from their forefathers?

Was it moreover possible, at the same time, to exhibit to them records containing a false account of its institution and of its continued observance by their fathers down to their own day, without their being aware of the forgery?

At whatever time this festival originated, was no account of it recorded; did no true history of it find its way into their literature? If such history existed, by what means was it suppressed, in order to make room for these apocryphal books, which compose the Old Testament, with their false account?

It must be admitted that there was a period of some seventy years when, being captives in Babylon and far from their Temple, there must have been impediments in the way of the celebration of this annual feast, at least with its full formalities. Is it likely that the remembrance of their previous history had passed away so completely in seventy years, that they could not tell whether the Passover was, or was not, one of their holy days, or what the signification of it was, or what their records said of it? A more thorough dispersion of the Jews which has now lasted for eighteen hundred years has not interrupted their traditions, nor hindered them from celebrating the Passover. Were their memories less retentive then, or their

attachment to their own national and religious customs more feeble?

In fine, this annual festival has been a fixed fact in history for many centuries; please account for it in some reasonable manner, or else step out of the way, in God's name, and don't stand sneering at a history authenticated by the faith of every civilized nation, and for which you can offer no substitute!

The same line of argument might be repeated for the Pentecost, or Feast of Weeks, observed in memory of the giving of the Law upon Mount Sinai, and as a thanksgiving for the earliest fruits of the harvest;<sup>1</sup> also for the Feast of Tabernacles, or Tents, in commemoration of the journey through the desert;<sup>2</sup> both of which solemnities were instituted by Moses, and the existence of which are utterly inexplicable if we reject the authority of the Pentateuch, and the other books of the Old Testament. At the present day, as we are informed, branches of the palm, the myrtle, and the willow of the brook, are carried in procession by the Jews at this latter feast, as prescribed in the book of Leviticus, and, where they cannot otherwise be procured, are expressly imported for the purpose from foreign countries. Besides the above, the Jews observed a variety of feasts and holy days, dating from different epochs and commemorative of events in their own history, to say nothing of the Sabbath, the rite of circumcision, and other religious observances, all of which present questions of the highest historical importance, and incapable of any satisfactory solution, if we reject the testimony of the Bible.

These ceremonies, so faithfully persevered in, afford a confirmation of our argument, which is all the stronger from the fact that their practical significance to the Jews,

<sup>1</sup> Numb. xxviii, 26; Jer. v, 24; 2 Chron. viii, 13.

<sup>2</sup> Lev. xxiii, 40; Zach. xiv, 16; John vii, 2.

as such, has long ago passed away. They point forward, almost all of them, to a coming Messias and Saviour. But that Saviour has come already, according to the clearest prophecies contained in their own sacred books, prophecies which designate not only his twofold character of God and Man, his being born of a virgin, his tribe, the place of his birth, and his nurture in a different section of the country, together with many remarkable circumstances attending his life and death, but even the very time of his coming. What, for instance, can be clearer than this? "Know therefore, and take notice that, from the going forth of the word to build up Jerusalem again unto Christ the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks." Sixty-nine weeks of years, or 483 years, according to the current chronology, spans the time from the 20th year of King Artaxerxes, who issued this decree for the rebuilding of the city, to the baptism of Christ when he began to preach the Gospel. "And after the sixty-two weeks Christ shall be slain, and the people that shall deny him shall not be his." How closely this designates the unbelieving and rejected race! "And a people with their leader that shall come shall destroy the city and sanctuary." We have the account of this destruction of Jerusalem under Titus, by Josephus, a vanquished general of the Jews in that cruel war. "And the end thereof shall be waste, and after the end of the war the appointed desolation." Has history anything more certain or more sad? "And he shall confirm the covenant with many in one week, and in the middle of the week the victim and the sacrifice shall fail." A little more than three years he preached, and gathered in those that were willing; then came that precious blood-shedding upon the Cross, by which the ancient sacrifices of the Law, mere types and shadows of this great oblation, were done away. "And

there shall be in the Temple the abomination of desolation, and the desolation shall continue even to the consummation and to the end.”<sup>1</sup> How strictly and to the letter the Prophet’s words have been fulfilled !

“Ne donnent que réponses dures,  
Accomplir fault les Escritures.”

This desolation has continued already 1800 years. A few of this deluded people, from time to time, grown weary of waiting for that temporal Prince; whose advent their own worldly dreams and not the Prophets had promised them, have recognized the Messias in Jesus the Saviour of souls ; a far greater number have given up almost all that was religious in the institutions of their fathers, and are Jews only in name and in clannish feeling, while others still look forward to the coming of a Messias to restore their state and revive their sacrifice. Ah ! hopeful faith, worthy of a more faithful foundation ! Ah ! faithful hope, worthy of a more hopeful consummation ! How the widowed daughter of Juda sits sad and comfortless in the land of strangers ! See her children, how they stand at the door of their cheerless dwelling, and peer out anxiously into the night ! But the Hope of Israel comes not to them ; He is not where they are looking ; He came when they were not looking and passed by, and they are gazing down the road by which He came. The words of the Prophet Jeremias are still true of them at this day : “While we were standing our eyes failed, expecting help for us in vain, for we looked earnestly toward a nation that had no power to save.”<sup>2</sup> And yet with blind hope and aching eyes they still keep watch at the door, and repeat that forlorn article in the Creed of Maimonides : “I believe with a perfect faith in the advent of the Messiah,

<sup>1</sup> Dan. ix, 25-27.

<sup>2</sup> Lamen. iv, 17.

and although He should tarry, yet will I patiently wait for Him every day until He come."

What keeps them thus bound to a delusive hope? What keeps them together at all? It is a sacred spell which they cannot break. Christ stands before Pilate with the two Testaments in His hand, and they are detained as witnesses.



## CHAPTER IX.

### THE CANON, OR CATALOGUE INSPECTED.

"Where's the roll? Where's the roll? Where's the roll? Let me see. Let me see. So.—*K. Henry IV.*

WE trust that our case is so far made out as to satisfy every candid reader of the authenticity of all those books of the Old Testament which Jewish tradition has stamped with the national seal. It only remains now to show what books these are.

The Jews of Palestine included in their canon of sacred Scripture twenty-two books. Such is the testimony of Josephus, who was a prominent chief in their republic at the time of its dissolution, of a priestly race also, and perfectly familiar with Jewish affairs, both secular and religious. "We have only twenty-two books, which are justly believed to be divine. And of them five belong to Moses, and contain his laws, and the traditions of the origin of mankind until his death. . . . The Prophets who were after Moses wrote down what was done in their times in thirteen books. The remaining four books contain hymns to God, and precepts for the conduct of human life."<sup>1</sup>

St. Jerome translated these books from Hebrew into Latin, and testifies that they constituted the canon of the Jews, of which he gives the list, as follows :

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. contra Appion, lib. i.

Genesis.	Ezekiel.
Exodus.	The twelve lesser Prophets, in
Leviticus.	one book.
Numbers.	Job.
Deuteronomy.	The Psalms.
Josue.	The Proverbs.
The Judges, with Ruth.	Ecclesiastes.
Samuel, or the first two books	The Canticles.
of Kings.	Daniel.
The Kings (3d and 4th), in one	The Paralipomenon, in two
book.	books.
Isaias.	Esdras, also double.
Jeremias, with his Lamentations.	Esther.

St. Melito, who lived in the second century, Origen, St. Epiphanius, St. Cyril, St. Hilary,—all give the same list, with the exception that, in the list of St. Melito, the book of Esther is omitted, probably by accident or some fault of the copyist.

It is an interesting question for us to know when and how this Hebrew canon was first authoritatively drawn up. The Jewish tradition on this subject attributes the formation of their canon to the Prophet Esdras, with the consent and approbation of the Great Synagogue, which is the name they give to a council or senate of their doctors which, they say, presided over the nation after the return from captivity.<sup>1</sup> The ancient Christian Fathers, says

<sup>1</sup> A contributor to the *New American Cyclopædia*, himself apparently a Jew, referring to the times and labors of Esdras, or Ezra, and his contemporaries Haggai, Zechariah, Nehemiah and others, "the men of the great Assembly," says: "The sacred Scriptures were collected, authenticated, and arranged into a canon, including the most precious remnants of a vast literature, among the lost parts of which were the often mentioned and quoted 'book Hayashar,' probably a collection of historical songs, the book of the 'Wars of the Lord,' the special 'Chronicles' of the kings of Judah and Israel, the prophecies of Nathan, Abijah, Iddo, and others, the 'History of Solomon,' various works of this king, and an endless multitude of others. Their great number was complained of in the philosophical book of Ecclesiastes."—*New American Cyclop. : Hebrews.*

Marchini, received this tradition with undoubted confidence.<sup>1</sup>

Esdras lived in the time of Artaxerxes, surnamed Longimanus, as appears by comparing the account given in the sacred volume with Josephus and the Persian history. He went up from Babylon to Jerusalem, by the royal permission and authority, in the seventh year of that reign, that is, about 467 years before the Christian era. He is called in the edict of Artaxerxes "the priest and most learned scribe of the law of the God of heaven;" and according to the above mentioned tradition of the Jews, he gathered together the canonical books, purged them of the faults which had crept into the text by the carelessness of the scribes, and classified them into twenty-two books, corresponding to the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. To him, also, is attributed the substitution of the modern Chaldean letters in place of the ancient Hebrew characters in which they were written. The Rabbins add that he instituted a school at Jerusalem, and established interpreters to explain the difficult passages of the Scriptures, and to watch over their integrity.<sup>2</sup>

There is a remarkable passage of Hebrew history left us by the Prophet Nehemias, which chimes in so well with this tradition, and is withal so full and touching, that we cannot forbear to transcribe it. The reader must figure to himself the new city of Jerusalem rising slowly upon the ruins of the old: the walls with their gates newly finished, but sadly shrunken from their ancient amplitude, the city even so too wide and great for the few people that occupied it, a feeble remnant of the captivity, while here and there their scattered tenements, hastily, and for the most part rudely constructed, only served to set off in melancholy relief the waste of ruins around. And beneath many a

<sup>1</sup> De div. and can. SS. BB.

<sup>2</sup> Feller's Biog. Univ.: Esdras.

cluster of gray locks, the eyes glistened with tears, as they gazed upon the new Temple—how plain and poor it seemed to those who had seen glittering on Mount Moriah the magnificent structure of Solomon in its full glory! The people felt afflicted and humiliated.

“Behold,” said they, mingling the recital of their sorrows with the confession of their sins, “we ourselves this day are bondmen, and the land which thou gavest our fathers, to eat the bread thereof, and the good things thereof, we ourselves are servants in it, and the fruits thereof grow up for the kings whom thou hast set over us for our sins.

“Yet thou art just in all things that have come upon us; because thou hast done truth, but we have done wickedness. Our kings, our princes, our priests, and our fathers have not kept thy law, and have not minded thy commandments and thy testimonies.”

Now, in the time of their humiliation, the hearts of the people returned to their long neglected law. In the scene that follows there is a certain dramatic power, arising not so much from the art of the writer as from his vivid recollection of what his own eyes had seen, and his own heart felt.

“And the seventh month came, and the children of Israel were in their cities. And all the people were gathered together as one man to the street which is before the Watergate; and they spoke to Esdras the scribe to bring the book of the Law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel. Then Esdras the priest brought the Law before the multitude of men and women, and all those that could understand, in the first day of the seventh month. And he read it plainly in the street that was before the Watergate, from the morning until mid-day, before the men and the women, and all those that could

understand ; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book.

“ And Esdras the scribe stood upon a step of wood, which he had made to speak upon ; and there stood by him Mathathias, and Semeia, and Ania, and Helcia, and Maasia on his right hand ; and on the left Phadaia, Misael, and Melchia, and Hasum, and Hasbadana, Zacharia, and Mosollam.

“ And Esdras opened the book before all the people, for he was above all the people ; and when he opened it all the people stood. And Esdras blessed the Lord the great God, and all the people answered : Amen ! Amen ! lifting up their hands ; and they bowed down and adored God with their faces to the ground. Now Josue, and Bani, and Serebia, Jamin, Accub, Septhai, Odia, Maasia, Celita, Azarias, Jozabed, Hanan, and Phalaia, the Levites, made silence among the people to hear the Law. And the people stood in their place.

“ And they read in the book of the Law of God distinctly, and plainly to be understood : and they understood when it was read. And Nehemias (he is Athersatha), and Esdras the priest and scribe, and the Levites who interpreted to all the people, said : This is a holy day to the Lord our God ; do not mourn nor weep. For all the people wept when they heard the words of the Law. And he said to them : Go, eat fat meats, and drink sweet wine, and send portions to them that have not prepared for themselves, because it is the holy day of the Lord ; and be not sad, for the joy of the Lord is our strength. And the Levites stilled all the people, saying : Hold your peace, for the day is holy, and be not sorrowful.” <sup>1</sup>

Did ever painter succeed in drawing a more luminous picture ? Nothing is wanting to complete it. We have

<sup>1</sup> 2 Esdras viii. (Nehem.)

the whole scene before us—the assembling of the multitude before the Watergate, the erecting of the platform, the enumeration of the parties that occupied it, with Esdras himself in front, the opening of the sacred book and rising of the people to their feet, the Prophet's tribute of praise to God and the response of the agitated crowd, the enforcement of silence by the zealous Levites. And now, our attention and interest in the tableau being fully secured by this officious arrangement of the details, the sacred author goes on to describe the slow reading of the Law, with occasional comment from the reader, amidst eager signs of intelligence from the hearers, until, at last, the climax of interest is reached, nature can no longer bear this strife between sadness and joy, floods of tears prevail, and a swelling tide of sobs, sighs, and exclamations, in which the voice of the reader is quenched. And finally, when there comes a little subsidence of this popular emotion, the voice of the Prophet rises again in sublime words of consolation, which only faith can appreciate: "*Be not sad; for the joy of the Lord is our strength.*"

Perhaps this may seem a broad digression from our subject, and may demand an apology. And maybe not. Independently of the beauty of the extract, this scene is not inappropriate to the present chapter, considered as a representation of the times, the men, and the circumstances to which, at least, a literary tradition attaches the fixing of the Hebrew canon.

The Hellenists, or Grecian Jews, had also their canon, or, at least, their catalogue of sacred books, including some written at a later period than the supposed formation of the Hebrew canon, namely: the books of Tobias, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, and the two books of the Macchabees. The Hellenist Bible contained also a few other but smaller portions of Scripture not found in the Hebrew.

These are the prayer of Azarias and the hymn of the three children in the 3d chapter of Daniel, the history of Susannah and of the idol Bel in the 13th and 14th of the same book; also the last seven chapters of Esther. The Hellenist catalogue corresponds with the Catholic canon, while the Protestants regard as uninspired all that is not found in the Hebrew canon. This is a point of controversy which we need not now concern ourselves with, since it does not affect the *authenticity* of any part of Scripture, nor yet the divine character of the Old Testament revelation, taken as a whole.

The latest of all the scriptural books is that named Ecclesiasticus. The author, as the prologue states, was Jesus, the son of Sirach, who wrote about 200 years before Christ. The last six chapters are devoted to the praises of the most celebrated fathers of the nation, especially those who had governed and instructed the people. The sacred writers figure so largely in the enumeration, that by a happy providence, of which the author was probably unconscious, we are presented with a catalogue nearly complete of the Scripture books. Of course we need not transfer it to our pages. No book is more easily referred to, if any one chooses.

And now, our list being made up, let us pass on to livelier matters. Adversaries are waiting for us, and we must attend to them.

## CHAPTER X.

### OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED.

"A brain that ever fears to err,  
And yet is never nobly right;  
It does not leap to great results,  
But, in some corner out of sight,  
Suspects a spot of latent blight,  
And o'er the impatient infinite,  
Still bargains, haggles, and consults."

LOWELL.

THE adversaries of Revelation, for the most part, content themselves with raising objections against the truthfulness of the Scriptures, or mocking at the mysteries and the miracles they contain. There are some also who make difficulties on the precise point of their authenticity. We will call up one of these, and hear his objections, such as they are.

We will not imagine to ourself a bitter opponent, with a fiery eye and a scalding tongue. We should decline argument with such an one for peace' sake. Ours is more full of self-satisfaction than bad temper. He is one that looks upon faith and piety as a bondage, and rejoices in his own liberty, which he maintains proudly but good-naturedly. He loves to talk about religion, but owns to no sort of worship; and says, with William of Deloraine:

"Penance, father, will I none;  
Prayer know I hardly one,  
So speed me my errand, and let me begone."



If you ply him with arguments, you will discover that his infidelity, although obstinate, has nothing earnest in it. It is an agreeable pastime. He is the "*Noir Fuineant*" of Ivanhoe. He is not greedy of victory, but proud of his own invincibility, and he stabs at Revelation, not because he is bloodthirsty and malignant, like Paine and Voltaire, but to show that he is equal to these masters of his in the science of unbelief. On the other hand, our reader must understand that he is a far different being from the gentle Skeptic, to whose candid and noble mind we address our argument. It is only for the sake of such that we call up this partisan of infidelity, not for his own. Of course, there is hope even for him, while life lasts, but our words will not remedy his errors, nor any light of argument. His horoscope is like that of the lofty lady of Branksome :

"Twinkling faint, and distant far,  
Shimmers through mist each planet star ;  
Ill may I read their high decree ;  
But no kind influence deign they shower  
On Teviot's tide, or Branksome's tower,  
Till pride be quelled, and love be free."

But we have no time to lose : let our opponent appear ! Our fancy paints him standing before us, as we have seen many of the species ere now. His hands are thrust deep into his trowsers pockets, or, perhaps, hooked on by the thumbs to the armholes of his waistcoat. His hat is fixed firmly on his head, and his legs are planted on the ground at an angle which indicates decision. He may, perhaps, have been once in the Legislature, for he spits quaquaversally.

*Objector.* Sir ! it has occurred to me, now and then, to glance over the pages of that singular book called the Old Testament, and I have noticed some very suspicious circumstances.

*Ans.* What are they?

*Obj.* It is a point of some importance, is it not, that the Law given to the Hebrews by the hand of Moses, should have been written by Moses himself?

*Ans.* It should seem so.

*Obj.* And yet it is somewhat strange that, being the author of the Pentateuch, Moses should always speak of himself in the third person; eh!

*Ans.* Not at all. Josephus does the same; so does Cæsar in his Commentaries; so do Xenophon, Esdras, and many others.

*Obj.* I think, nevertheless, it is not customary for historians to record their own death. Moses, it appears, is an exception. He informs us, in the last chapter of Deuteronomy, where and when he died, how old he was at the time, and names the valley where he was buried, adding a most singular piece of information—that “*no man hath known of his sepulchre until this present day.*”

*Ans.* If we add a few last sentences of Deuteronomy to the beginning of the first chapter of the book of Josue, the difficulty disappears. It must be borne in mind that the division of the Bible into chapters and verses is a thing of modern times; and that, in the compilation of different works in one volume, a transcriber might easily confound the division lines. Or we may suppose that Josue added the short account of Moses' death to the book of Deuteronomy. That no one knew the precise place of Moses' sepulture, not even his contemporaries, arose from the fact that he was buried by supernatural agency, without the aid of human hands, which Josue very naturally mentions to account for the seeming neglect of his remains by a people so deeply indebted to him. A motive for this lonely death and burial of the Prophet may be found in the number and sublimity of the miracles wrought

by him, which, among a people just emerging from the idolatrous influences of Egypt, might easily lead to an undue worship of his remains.

*Obj.* Sir! I have not yet done with this point. It is certain that Moses never crossed over into the land of Canaan, on the western side of the Jordan, being permitted only to look at it from the summit of a hill. Now the writer of Deuteronomy lived on the western side, for he says in the very outset: "*These are the words which Moses spoke to all Israel, beyond the Jordan, in the plain wilderness.*" And the same expression "beyond Jordan" is used in several places in the Book of Numbers.

*Ans.* The difficulty, my friend, is not a great one. We may suppose the words to have, as they undoubtedly had, a conventional meaning to indicate the country east of the Jordan. The Trasteverini, or *Romans on the other side of Tiber*, are so called by all the world, north, south, east, or west of that river. So also we have the expressions Cisalpine, Transalpine. Persons living in Connecticut speak of the North river and East river, although these are west and south of them. But if you are not satisfied with this explanation, it would be still no very dangerous admission, to allow that Josue or some succeeding Prophet may have added a word of explanation which became subsequently confounded with the original text.

*Obj.* Your apologies for Moses are so ingenious, Sir, that I cannot help troubling you with a few more difficulties. I find several places very happily named in the Pentateuch, which nevertheless received their proper christening after the times of Moses. For instance, we read in Gen. xiv, that Abraham pursued his enemies as far as Dan. Now Dan was a city which, as we are told elsewhere, first received that name in the time of the Judges, in honor of the great-grandson of Abraham.<sup>1</sup> So Galgal—

<sup>1</sup> Judges xviii, 29.

*Ans.* My dear friend, Dans and Galgals may have been as plenty in those days as Washington counties in—

*Obj.* Don't interrupt me, if you please. Then mention is several times made in the Pentateuch of Hebron, which city, we are afterward told in Josue (ii), was called Arbe, until it came into the possession of Caleb, after Moses' death, when it took the name of Hebron. So again Joseph is made to call Canaan the "land of the Hebrews," which title it could not claim in his days, nor yet in those of Moses, since the Hebrews were not yet in possession of it. Moses therefore cannot be the author of the Pentateuch, but some one living later.

*Ans.* It is not said that Hebron was called Arbe *until* Caleb received it for a possession, but only that its ancient name was Arbe. Be it remembered also that *Hebron* was precisely the dwelling place of Abraham "*the Hebrew*," so called in Genesis (xiv) from Heber his ancestor, and therefore very probably received its name in his day, and was always known by the same name to his descendants the Hebrews. The heathen nations who occupied the country during the servitude of the Israelites in Egypt had, no doubt, their own name for it, which would be quickly changed on the return of the old occupants. Canaan was rightly called the "land of the Hebrews," even in Joseph's time, for they had just come from it, and it was promised to their seed again. Therefore Moses' copyright to the Pentateuch stands good yet. But is it not a shame to oppose such trifling difficulties to a tradition so old, so universal, so constant, as that which has brought down to our days these books of Moses?

*Obj.* Ah! Perhaps you mean to deny that there are any real difficulties to explain in the Old Testament?

*Ans.* No, Sir; Bossuet does not, and I can pretend to

no greater light than he had. "Doubtless," he says, "there are difficulties, which would not exist if the book were less ancient ; or if it had been forged, as some venture to assert, by a clever and industrious man ; or if less care had been taken by those concerned to pass it on to us in the same condition they received it, and they had taken the liberty to correct what embarrassed them. There are certain difficulties which a long period of time is apt to bring about, when places change their name, or their condition, when dates are forgotten,<sup>1</sup> when genealogies are no longer known, when there is no longer any remedy for the mistakes which a copy ever so little neglected introduces easily in such matters ; or when facts that have escaped the memory of man leave some part of the history in obscurity. But, after all, where is this obscurity ? Is it in the connection of events, or in the real substance of the thing ? Not at all. All is consecutive, and what remains obscure only serves to make manifest in the Sacred Books an antiquity still more venerable."<sup>2</sup>

*Obj.* It appears then that some changes and additions in the Bible are to be admitted. How will Bossuet maintain its integrity after such an admission ?

*Ans.* Let him answer for himself. "As for these alleged additions," he says, and his noble soul is fretted by the littleness of the charge, "let us look at them ; what do they amount to ? Is there some new law added, or a new ceremony, a point of doctrine, some miracle, some prophecy ? No one dreams of such a thing ; there is not the least suspicion of it, not the slightest indication. That would have been adding to the word of God ; the Law

<sup>1</sup> Mistakes in dates are easily made both by printers and copyists, as numbers are commonly expressed by arbitrary signs of their own. The Old Testament has probably suffered more in this way than any other. Hence the confusion in its chronology.

<sup>2</sup> Discours sur L'Hist. Univ., part ii.

forbade it, and the scandal caused by it would have been frightful. What is it then? Why, some one perhaps has explained the name of a city, which had changed with the lapse of time. Four or five notes of this nature, made by Josue or Samuel, or some other prophet of equal antiquity, because merely regarded as facts of notoriety, and which involved no difficulty, have very naturally passed into the text, and the same tradition has brought them to us with the rest. Therefore, forsooth, all is lost! The whole work must be convicted of forgery? The authority, the public confidence of so many ages will not help it; as if, on the contrary, one could not see that these notes, which so much noise is made about, furnish us with additional proof of the sincerity and good faith, not only of those who made them, but those also that copied them. Did men ever judge of the authority—I do not say of a divine book, but of any book whatever, by such frivolous reasons?"<sup>1</sup>

*Obj.* Bossuet was a great man, no doubt—the “Eagle of Meaux”—I touch my hat to his memory.

<sup>1</sup> What would the French prelate have said to the captious arithmetical difficulties revived by the Anglican Bishop Colenso, of Natal? How and by whom was a mitre put upon such a head as his? The Jews laugh at his ignorant arguments from the Hebrew. He talks learnedly upon physical questions, quoting with perfect confidence those ponderous accumulations of undigested science and sneering infidelity, “The Types of Mankind,” and “Indigenous Races of Men;” and venturing in one instance upon an astronomical argument of his own, he puts forth such nonsense as the following: “Archbishop Pratt quotes only the words ‘so the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day;’ and although this is surely one of the most prominent questions, in respect of which it is asserted that ‘Scripture and Science is at variance,’ he dismisses the whole subject in a short note, and never even mentions the moon. But the Bible says, ‘The sun stood still and the moon stayed,’ Jo. x, 13; and the arresting of the earth’s motion, while it might cause the appearance of the sun ‘standing still,’ would not account for the moon ‘staying.’” (1) Is the Bishop

*Ans.* Ay, he had indeed some of the qualities of that noble bird. His was a towering intelligence, and from the height where he stood, his eagle eye could take in the whole of history at a glance. The woodpecker is a sprightly bird, and sees many little things near the end of his bill, but his prospect is not extensive.

*Obj.* I am not disposed to urge these difficulties any further, Sir, at present. I can afford to waive them, because I have something else in store which may give you more trouble.

[Our indomitable objector here gives his hat a forward, downward, and oblique pull, which leaves it resting unconformably upon his head, with a strong dip toward the right eyebrow. This is a strong position in controversy. The eye nearest under the hat being partly closed by it, indicates concentration of force upon a particular point. The other remains wide open to watch the result, and take advantage of any confusion in the enemy's ranks.]

What would you say, my excellent friend, if I should undertake to point out the very time and occasion when this Old Testament Bible was gotten up, and the man himself that did it?

*Ans.* I would thank you for it, and admire your courage.

*Obj.* In the chapter just finished of your manuscript, you have introduced one Esdras or Ezra, who figured about the time of the return from captivity, and the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Is it not so?

*Ans.* Yes.

really ignorant of the fact that the apparent motions of the sun and moon around the earth are produced by the same cause? But the mistake may be attributed to carelessness. What value then could he attach to a faith which he defended so carelessly?

See "Pent. and Book of Joshua," by Bishop Colenso. Preface, p. 9, note.

*Obj.* It was he, you said, formed the Hebrew canon of Scripture, and corrected the errors that had crept into the text.

*Ans.* Well!

*Obj.* For my part, I affirm with confidence that Esdras not only formed the Canon, but made the entire Book, out and out.

*Ans.* Where is your proof?

*Obj.* There is a certain ancient book which bears the name of this Prophet, and professes to have been written by him—the Fourth Book of Esdras.<sup>1</sup> Do you know it?

*Ans.* I know nothing good of it.

*Obj.* It accounts very well for the origin of the Bible. In the 14th chapter of this book, the prophet tells us that one day sitting under an oak, he had a divine vision, in which he was directed to go preach to the people: And he answered: “Behold I will go, as thou hast commanded me, and reprove the present people, but who shall reprove those that are yet to be born? For the world is situated in darkness, and its inhabitants are without light; because the Law has been burnt up, wherefore no one knows the things which have been done by thee, or the works which are to begin. If, therefore, I have found favor with thee, send the Holy Spirit into me, and I will write all that has been done in the world from the beginning, the things namely which were written in thy Law, so that men may be able,” &c. And then he goes on to relate how he went into a retired place for forty days, with five scribes; and after drinking from a cup of something that looked like water, but had a blush of fire in it—the name of the liquor is not mentioned—he became inspired with intellect, wisdom, and a prodigious memory; and after dictating to his clerks for forty days, night and day

<sup>1</sup> Styled II Esdras by Protestants.



without stopping, he finished this restoration of the Bible, amounting in all to twenty-four books.

*Ans.* You seem to mock at this account. Do you believe it?

*Obj.* Well, you know I am not over-credulous in the matter of visions and miracles, and I should not like to accept the wonderful parts of this story. But I beg your attention to the facts. Here is a book professing to be written during the Babylonian captivity by the Prophet Esdras. It contains an explicit statement that the books of the Old Testament were all destroyed by fire, the same fire, doubtless, that destroyed the city and Temple; that they were afterward all rewritten by himself, and delivered to the people as the genuine Bible, restored by himself under the influence of inspiration. Now, as to the vision and the forty days and nights of inspiration—that part of the story, I conceive, was got up to inspire confidence in the correctness of his restored copy. But the account of the loss by fire, of the veritable Hebrew sacred books, and the production of their substitutes by the prophet, is credible enough, and to me highly probable; albeit I would not be willing, under such circumstances, to give credit to their integrity. You understand my argument?

*Ans.* Yes.

*Obj.* What do you say to it?

*Ans.* Why, in the first place, that the book you quote has not the slightest authority; and yet it is the only authority you have for the whole fable.

*Obj.* Why do you say it has no authority?

*Ans.* It has not the authority of Esdras, for it was not written by him, nor by any one in his day. It pretends to be an inspired book, but it was not in the Hebrew canon, nor that of the Hellenists, nor in any early catalogue of inspired books, nor does Jewish tradition know

anything of it. In fact, it is very evident that the book was written in Christian times, for it contains many expressions quoted almost word for word from the New Testament, with respect to the coming and death of Christ, his final appearance at the end of the world, the resurrection of the dead, &c. It will be sufficient to give for an example one of these, stolen from the Apocalypse of St. John—"And I said to the Angel: who is He that puts crowns upon them, and places palms in their hands? And he answered and said: This is the Son of God, whom they have confessed in the world."<sup>1</sup>

It never had any authority among the Jews, who should have known something of it, had it been written by Esdras, or if it threw any true light on their history. And finally, although some early Christians seem to have been deceived by it, it never acquired any authority in the Christian Church. St. Jerome says that he never read it, for why should he read a book condemned by the Church, and reproves the heretic Vigilantius for citing it. "*Tu Vigilans dormis, et dormiens scribis, et proponis librum apochryphum qui sub nomine Esdræ a te et a tuis similibus legitur.*"<sup>2</sup> The book bears evident marks of a desire to convert the Jews to Christianity, and is overcharged with very broad and direct prophecies of Christ. The author was himself probably a converted Jew, but, if not unsettled in his head, which is the most likely supposition, he was a very impudent impostor.

*Obj.* Is it not somewhat bold, Sir, for a man of your faith to say, that a book is absolutely destitute of authority, when you acknowledge that St. Ambrose and others have cited it as genuine and even inspired?

*Ans.* Not at all. A few persons can never constitute an authority in such matters, in opposition to the public

<sup>1</sup> Chap. v, 46.

<sup>2</sup> Adv. Vigil. See Calmet. Dissert. sur 4 Esdr.

judgment. There was never an error that found no friends; this one had few enough, and was soon forsaken. The 4th Book of Esdras has been handed down to our day by the same tradition that stamps it as an imposture.

*Obj.* Why then, even at this day, is it printed in one cover with your Bibles?

*Ans.* It is a literary curiosity of the early Christian ages, and its place in the literary world is by the side of the books which it counterfeits. In truth, you will not find it in any Bibles except those printed for the use of the learned.

*Obj.* Of one thing, at least, I am confident. I have succeeded in throwing suspicion upon this Old Testament of yours, and that's enough to damn it; for a book which challenges our belief to so many wonders, ought to be what Cæsar required of his wife, not only innocent, but unsuspected.

*Ans.* I am ready to acknowledge this, that the higher and holier a reputation is, the more sensitive it is to the breath of slander, and as the poet says, by the mouth of the villain Iago,

"Trifles, light as air,  
Are, to the jealous, confirmations strong  
As proofs of holy writ."

For this reason the man, who searches for apparent difficulties in the sacred Scriptures to spread them before the minds of the unsteady and unlearned, is like the calumniator of a virtuous woman, an object of honest scorn. But, to come to this saying of Cæsar's—if he meant any more than that his wife should give no cause for suspicion, he spoke like an unreasonable brute. It ought to be no taint on the good fame of a virtuous woman to be suspected by some who have no conception of virtue. It should be none on the reputation of the Bible to be suspected by men who

cannot understand reasons. One who is incapable of sifting the proofs on which an alleged fact rests, and of distinguishing between a foolish objection and one well founded, must not meddle with arguments nor aspire to be guided by any judgment of his own.

*Obj.* Don't be offended !

*Ans.* Don't appeal to ignorance !

*Obj.* Well, I don't wish to do that. But, my good friend, you must allow, at least, that the account contained in this book is a very fair conjecture. Esdras may have done all this, and the possibility of the thing is enough to shake the credit of the Bible.

*Ans.* But the thing is not possible.

*Obj.* Why not ?

*Ans.* I will let another and abler man answer for me. In the Theological Dictionary of the Abbé Bergier, this infidel charge is met and refuted as follows :

“1. Esdras did not come from Babylon to Judea until sixty-three years after the first colony of Jews returned from captivity in the reign of Cyrus, and under the conduct of Zorobabel ; and he was neither High Priest nor Supreme Judge of the nation, but only a simple minister of the sacrifice. Were the Jews so docile, that they would receive from this priest books, doctrines, laws, and customs, of which they had no knowledge until then ? If the Jews had not been imbued with that belief, those customs, those hopes, which they have always attributed to the books of Moses, we must look upon them as fools to quit Persia and Assyria, in order to come and establish themselves in Judea. It was not Esdras inspired them with this folly sixty-three years before he came himself.

“2. He certifies in his book<sup>1</sup> that, when he arrived

<sup>1</sup> 1 Esdras, so called in distinction from the 2d Esdras, a continuation of the former, but written by the Prophet Nehemias.

at Jerusalem, he found the Temple rebuilt, the worship reëstablished, the civil administration renewed in full force, *according to the Law of Moses* ; that all the regulations he made himself were made in virtue of that same Law ; consequently, that Law was known and revered by the Jews before Esdras was in the world. How came they by the knowledge of it, except through the books of Moses ?

“3. It is impossible that one single man can have possessed all the knowledge, historical, physical, geographical and political, necessary to produce not only the five books of Moses, but all the others which compose the Old Testament. It is not possible that he should have known how to vary his style well enough to take the distinguishing tone and manner of twelve or fifteen different authors. We have only to compare the book of Esdras with that of Deuteronomy, and see whether they are by the same author. Esdras did not write in pure Hebrew ; he mingled the Chaldee with it. The only work that could be attributed to him, besides that which bears his name, are the two books of Paralipomenon, and those he could not have done, if the preceding books had not existed. Would he have repeated there what is already related in the books of the Kings, if he had been author of both ? No ; he would simply have taken up the history at the point where the books of the Kings had left it.

“4. We must suppose Esdras inspired—to make prophecies which had not yet been accomplished in his time ; namely, those which point to the Messias, and to the conversion of the Gentiles, those of Daniel which announce the succession of the kingdoms, &c.

“5. If the books of Moses had been forged by Esdras, the Cutheans established in Samaria, mortal enemies of that priest and of the Jews that honored him, would never

have received these books for divine, as the rule of their faith and their civil administration. No people has ever voluntarily accepted an enemy for their lawmaker. The constancy of these Samaritans to preserve the ancient Hebrew characters, whilst the Jews adopted the Chaldaic, proves that of these peoples one was never willing to have anything in common with the other.

“6. If the Jews had not been well convinced that there was a law of Moses, which law forbade them to take wives from amongst strangers, would they have consented to separate from those they had already taken, and to send them away with the children they had by them, as they actually did when Esdras required it?<sup>1</sup> Certain infidels have charged him with cruelty on this account; he would not have dared to propose such a thing of his own authority.

“Now we do not know a single one of these critics, that has given himself the trouble to answer any of these arguments.

“Those who have imagined that a part of the Old Testament books were lost during the Babylonian captivity, and that Esdras restored them, fall very nearly into the same difficulties. The books of Tobias and Esther certify us that, during the captivity, the Jews observed their religion, their laws, their national customs, as well as they were able. They were attached therefore to their sacred books. A legislation so complicated, and minutely detailed as that of the Jews, could not be preserved by a simple tradition. If all the copies of the Chronicles of Froissart or of the History of Joinville were lost, we should like to know what man among us would be capable of restoring them to the same state as before.”<sup>2</sup>

*Obj.* I will not press this objection any further, Sir.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Esdras, x.

<sup>2</sup> Dictionnaire Theologique. Esdras.

We both have had our say, and it is not necessary for us to fight the same battle over again. But I have something else to offer. What do you say to Paine's criticism on the book of Genesis?

*Ans.* What is it?

*Obj.* I will give it to you in his own words. "As to the account of the creation, with which the book of Genesis opens, it has all the appearance of being a tradition which the Israelites had among them before they came into Egypt; and, after their departure from that country, they put it at the head of their history, without telling (as is most probable) that they did not know how they came by it. The manner in which the account opens shows it to be traditionary. It begins abruptly; it is nobody that speaks; it is nobody that hears; it is addressed to nobody; it has neither first, second, nor third person; it has every criterion of being a tradition, it has no voucher. Moses does not take it upon himself by introducing it with the formality that he uses on other occasions, such as that of saying: "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying."<sup>1</sup>

*Ans.* I think it altogether probable that the Hebrews in Moses' day, and before, did know much of what is contained in the book of Genesis, and knew it by tradition. I am not prepared to dispute that they had that tradition in writing, and that Moses may have incorporated it into his book. This supposition makes nothing against the authority of Genesis. Is his account of the early history of mankind less authentic because he found the materials necessary to prepare it, because he tells of past events that were already known before he told them? And if the Israelites had this account, as Mr. Paine thinks, by tradition, why does he say that "they did not know how they came by it?" There are obscure and half-told narratives

<sup>1</sup> Age of Reason, part i.

in Genesis that look very much like precious fragments of written tradition, gathered and preserved by the prophet without addition or comment of his own. The account of the creation however does not appear to me to have anything of that character, for it is perfectly methodical and sustained throughout, like the work of a man who writes freely, without having extracts to make, or authorities to consult. Those points in the general style of the first and second chapters of Genesis, which Paine considers as characteristics of a *tradition*, seem to me very far from indicating anything of the kind. It is the ordinary way of writing, so far as my experience goes, whether we regard this account of creation as a narrative of events in their actual order, or simply as a popular and graphic statement of a doctrine. Mr. Paine's reasoning seems to me very inconclusive, although the conclusion he draws is absolutely harmless. What if the whole substance of Genesis had come down to Moses by tradition; is it any the less authentic or true; or would Mr. Paine prefer that the prophet, like Joe Smith, should have conjured the materials of his history out of the bottom of an old hat?

*Obj.* If the book is a divine one, the contents should have been revealed to the prophet by God.

*Ans.* The historical matter of Genesis could be known without revelation. Why should God reveal to man, what man knows already?

*Obj.* When Paine says that the Bible account of the creation has all the appearance of a tradition, he does not mean a written tradition, for that he would consider a contradiction in terms. He means an oral tradition, that is to say, something like an Indian legend, where real facts, casual gossip, and ghost stories are mingled together, and come at last to be believed for true history.

*Ans.* It is very conceivable that Paine did not well



understand what he meant. His education was deficient. He had not the training even of a systematic infidel. With all his reckless impiety he had a great deal of cant ; both his philosophy and his terminology savor sometimes of the drab, and sometimes of the conventicle, more no doubt than he wished or was aware of. Like a great many persons reared in the same atmosphere, he had only a partial and vague idea of what tradition implies, and could therefore have no critical judgment in matters of history. I am glad that you have brought forward this objection of his, for it affords me an occasion to introduce a chapter on the nature and uses of tradition. If you will trouble yourself to read it, you will find a full answer to this last objection, and a key to many others. It will serve also as a transition chapter, comprising in the compass of a nutshell the leading arguments for the authenticity of the Old Testament Scriptures, and constituting the egg from which the demonstration of their truthfulness must develop. I wish you a very good morning.

*Obj.* Wait a moment ! I hope we part good friends, Sir. I am a capital fellow, I assure you, although a sad dog in the way of faith and piety. I am acquainted with many good Christians and even some of the clergy, and often have a pleasant little controversy with them. They know me for a liberal man. Wouldn't you come take dinner with me ? You might convert me, perhaps ; who knows ?

*Ans.* No ; excuse me. I desire your conversion with all my heart ; but at present "it is not the hare that I do hunt." I see no good that I can give or gain by any further conversation. Your liberality is not of the sort that I admire, although more amiable than bigotry. I acknowledge that you have a good temper, and appreciate

it; but, if I may say so, without offence, there is a more important quality that you lack.

*Obj.* Do tell me what it is! I like to improve, and it may not be too late.

*Ans.* It is EARNESTNESS; without which a man is not half a man. A mere animal cannot be earnest, because it has no soul whose aliment and life is truth and rational joy. It has its sensual appetites, and therefore can be eager, but never earnest. For this reason, I say that a trifler is only half a man at best. He is meant for one, made for one, has the capacity to be one, and is not. His being was given him that he might seek for truth, have it, hold it, honor and enjoy it; but his life is a failure, because he does not live in earnest.

*Obj.* Upon my word! now you are becoming quite solemn. Pray, tell me what do you mean by earnestness?

*Ans.* An earnest man is one whose soul is set upon the good and true. He believes in truth, and honors it, cherishes what he has of it, and craves for more. He may be in error, but even then he is a true man, for he mistakes error for truth, and as truth only he honors it. For that very reason error is dangerous in the hands of an earnest man. It is no plaything with him, but a weapon. It is no flirtation, but a sincere and honorable love, and he will die for it. It is not wonderful therefore that some of the noblest champions of the truth have once been violent partisans of error.

*Obj.* How, if your earnest man should be in doubt? What sort of a genius will he be then?

*Ans.* He will be miserable. Doubt is ignorance stripped of its tranquillity. For the earnest man, doubt is like the pangs of death. But he will not rest in it. His soul is too noble to become indifferent, too truthful to

espouse an uncertain part, too generous to sink into discouragement. He will find his way out.

*Obj.* Alas! poor man, I am afraid he will fret that earnest soul of his away first. What says that great philosopher, Cousin? "Error is the law of our nature; we are condemned to it, and in all our opinions, in all our words there is always a large portion of error, even absurdity."<sup>1</sup>

*Ans.* Cousin blasphemes against his own manhood. Our minds were created for truth, and not for error. But I see you are not only a skeptic in religion, but in everything else.

*Obj.* Well, yes; in some sort. That is to say, I am an eclectic, and hate all dogmatism. "Where there is not a certain portion of skepticism, there is no true eclecticism; and hence an immoderate dogmatism."<sup>2</sup>

*Ans.* God deliver us from such philosophy! I knew you to be a trifler, but I did not know there was so much method in your trifling. Once more, good morning! Words are lost on one who owns himself to be by nature and necessity the slave of error. I am going to meet another skeptic of a manlier make; who believes in truth, and in his own capacity to possess it; whose doubts are in his head, not in his heart; who loves the light, and will follow where he finds it.

<sup>1</sup> Hist. of Philos., 2d ser., vol. ii, lect. 4

<sup>2</sup> Cousin, *ibid.* lect., 7.

## CHAPTER XI.

### SOMETHING ABOUT TRADITION—ITS MEANING AND VALUE.

“Then shall our names,  
Familiar in their mouths as household words—  
Harry the king, Bedford, and Exeter,  
Warwick, and Talbot, Salisbury, and Gloster,—  
Be in their flowing cups freshly remembered:  
This story shall the good man teach his son;  
And Crispin Crispian shall ne’er go by,  
From this day to the ending of the world,  
But we in it shall be remembered.”

*King Henry V.*

IN earlier times knowledge was thought to be a fruit of education, and a thing of slow growth; men became wise by cherishing the wisdom of their fathers, and nations by building on the experience of the past. “Solon! Solon! said an ancient priest of Egypt, you Greeks are always children, and aged Greek there is none. Solon, on hearing this, replied: How can you say that? To whom the priest: You are all youths in intelligence, for you hold no ancient opinions derived from remote tradition, nor any system of discipline that can boast of a hoary old age.”<sup>1</sup>

As a striking contrast to this sentiment of the Egyptian sage, we extract the following from a letter of Elias Hicks, the American Quaker: “I may now recommend thee to shake off all the traditional views which thou hast imbibed from external evidence, and turn thy mind to the light within, as the only true teacher, and wait patiently for its instructions, and it will teach thee more than men

<sup>1</sup> Timæus of Plato.

or books can do, and lead thee to a clearer sight and sense of what thou desirest to know, than I have words clearly to convey to thee." <sup>1</sup>

Elias understands well what he is about. He is no blind zealot declaiming wildly against tradition without knowing that he is battering at the very pillars of testimony that Revelation rests on. His cold gray eyes twinkle thoughtfully and warily beneath that smooth broad brim. He knows the real bearing of the vulgar prejudice against tradition, and how to take advantage of it. Others before him have raised a successful outcry, and shaken off the authority of Christian tradition, under pretence that it conflicts with the supremacy of the Bible. He also takes up his parable against it, in order to shake off the authority of the Bible itself, and set up in its place the "inner light," as the rallying cry of a sanctimonious infidelity. Paine has nothing left to do, but to throw off the drab, and speak modern English.

Now, to those who have any clear conception of what tradition is, it is a wonder of wonders how the poor thing should have been so long and so grievously slandered. To judge by the handling she receives in common talk, she should be the most unscrupulous and disreputable witch that ever practised upon the simplicity of mankind. A liar she of the first class, and never to be listened to on any account: sometimes full of craft and malice, and at other times indeed so preposterous in her folly that one cannot help laughing at her. In fine, the truth is ordinarily best got at by taking the contrary of all she says; for she has dealings with the wicked One, and it is in the contract never to tell a straight story. She is that veritable gossip that Virgil lashes so under the name of Rumor:

<sup>1</sup> To Dr. Shoemaker. Introd. to Theol. works of Thos. Paine. Ed. 1824.

*"Nocte volat cœli medio terræque, per umbram  
Stridens, nec dulci declinat lumina somno;  
Tam ficti pravique tenax quam nuntia veri."*

She is that same evil spirit that ruled among the Pharisees, that put them up to say "Corban," to pray at the street corners, to wash their hands before meals, and that made them scrupulous about mint, anise, and cummin. There are some persons, to be sure, more romantic than religious, that look upon her with a kindlier eye, as a dear dreaming old creature full of delightful fancies, ballads, and legends, that may be entertained for amusement's sake, without being believed. If not a good guide, she is at least a pleasant companion, and they say of her as Mar-mion said of the Palmer :

*"I love such holy ramblers; still  
They know to charm a weary hill,  
With song, romance, or lay;  
Some jovial tale, or glee, or jest,  
Some lying legend at the least,  
They bring to cheer the way."*

Now inasmuch as we, on the contrary, entertain a great respect for tradition; believe that the world cannot well get along without her; that she is necessary to religion, science, art, and to the perpetuation of all knowledge; and as we feel sorry therefore to hear her so much decried, we take up her defence forthwith. That defence will consist chiefly in explaining what she is.

Tradition, as all the world knows, is from the Latin verb "tradere," to deliver, or hand down. If all the world would reflect on this, it would help to straighten out some twisted ideas. Tradition means simply the handing down of truths, precepts, doctrines, facts, or customs from one generation to another, and corresponds very nearly with the word education. Objectively speaking, it

is the thing itself so handed down, and is synonymous with story or history. For, as sagely says an old burlesque—

“ For nothing else is history,  
But pickle of antiquity,  
Where things are kept in memory.”

If our definition be correct, there is no call for this indiscriminating clamor against tradition. Has society any memory of herself—of her past life, past habits, past knowledge, past errors, past prejudices? If she has, that memory is tradition. But tradition is a general term, and divisible therefore into kinds, or species. Let us see what these are, and call them by their names.

First, they are sacred or profane, according as they refer to religious or secular matters. Sacred traditions are either divine, patriarchal, apostolical, or ecclesiastical, according to the original source from which they derive. Secular traditions are called by various names, taken either from their original source, or the particular channel through which they run. In fact there is no end to these distinctions, for every nation, every public body, every profession and calling, every school, every family has its own traditions. Scarcely anything exists in nature or art that has come to any age, but some tradition clings to it, like the evergreen ivy to the oak. Scarce a cliff, brook, grove, mountain glen, or forsaken heath that is not haunted by old remembrances, and where some heart is not startled by a familiar knocking, and a thought stealing in to whisper

“ It is the spot—I know it well—  
Of which our old traditions tell.”

There is, however, one distinction upon which it is more pertinent to our purpose to dwell, namely, that which divides tradition into Oral and Written. The distinction

is so natural a one that it should be almost as old as the art of letters. It was certainly well understood in the days of St. Paul, who, in exhorting the faithful of Thessalonica, says: "*Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which you have learned, whether by word, or by our epistle.*" Oral tradition is the only kind which, in our part of the world, men seem to conceive of now, and written tradition is called history. The change of terms has grown out of a confusion of ideas, and the confusion of ideas is upheld by the abuse of terms. Let us take up this snarl, and try to unravel it. Our whole argument for the authority of the Bible depends upon a right understanding of what tradition is.

Father Le Jeune, the celebrated blind preacher of the Oratory, in commenting on those words of the 44th Psalm: "*Lingua mea calamus scribæ velociter scribentis,*" takes occasion to compare the advantages and disadvantages of speech and scripture, and his words furnish us an excellent starting point. "The tongue and the pen," he says, "are two things which resemble each other very much, and which are at the same time dissimilar. Both form words, the one in the air, and the other on paper, but with a great difference. The tongue puts forth words promptly and rapidly, but they are not lasting; they pass and fly away as if they had wings. All the words that I have spoken hitherto have disappeared; if one would keep them he must pronounce them continually. The pen, on the contrary, forms tardy words, but permanent ones, and which last for ages."<sup>1</sup>

Now, oral tradition is little else than words preserved from perishing by repetition from mouth to mouth, and when these words are transferred to paper, the tradition becomes also a written one. It is not exactly true that

<sup>1</sup> Serm. sur la manière d'entendre la predication.



spoken words are lost as soon as the sounds which embody them have ceased to vibrate. There is a tablet in the human memory where they remain printed for a while, and on the very spot where spoken as many copies are taken as listeners are there to hear them. True, much that is said is soon forgotten, because it may make little impression in the first place, and is therefore little thought of or repeated afterward; but everything of real and general interest, which falls on the ear or meets the eye, is caught up by the stream of tradition, and wafted on as long as any remain who are interested to preserve it. On the other hand, in these days, when writing is done, not with the quill alone, but with leaden pens, the remarks of Father Le Jeune scarcely do full justice to written tradition. Words are not formed slowly in the printer's press, but stamped, multiplied, and circulated with a facility rivalling that of speech.

Practically speaking, among a civilized people, oral and written tradition are inseparable; for nothing of any great and general interest can long remain unwritten, while the fact of its being on record will not stop the public tongue, which always maintains its running commentary. In truth, the authenticity, if not the very existence, of the record would be in peril, if the oral tradition should cease. If, however, it were worth while to urge a dispute on the general merits of the two, judgment must be rendered in favor of the first, as the most necessary and essential. Tradition can exist without writing, but not without speech. In the play of King Richard III, when the young Prince of Wales is recommended by his treacherous uncle to repose a while in the Tower of London, he makes the following wise reflections upon the antiquity of the building, and the tenacity of oral tradition:

"*Prince.* I do not like the Tower, of any place—  
Did Julius Cæsar build that place, my Lord?

*Glo.* He did, my gracious Lord, begin that place,  
Which since succeeding ages have re-edified.

*Prince.* Is it upon record? or else reported  
Successively from age to age he built it?

*Buck.* Upon record, my gracious Lord.

*Prince.* But say, my Lord, it were not registered:  
Methinks the truth should live from age to age,  
As 'twere retailed to all posterity,  
Even to the general all-ending day.  
What say you, uncle?

*Glo.* I say, without characters, fame lives long."

The great tenacity of oral tradition is derived from its great popularity. The tongue is the natural organ of communication between man and man, and common to all. It has not only a wonderful facility and rapidity of action, but a matchless energy of expression, and a matchless power of persuasion all its own. Oral tradition, therefore, is the great public school where all men and all nations are educated. The world would go on if all books were destroyed, although no doubt at an immense disadvantage; but without oral tradition all education would come to a stand, knowledge would disappear from the earth, and all the monuments and records of past time would lie as useless lumber. They would have as little meaning, to the dull eye of man, as the hieroglyphics over an ancient temple gate to the lion that passes under to his lair in the ruins.

On the other hand, it must not be denied that oral tradition by itself alone is wanting in that steady, changeless character which pen and print give to language. The chief advantage of written words is not, as we think, in their permanency, but in their unchangeableness. They may be lost or destroyed, but cannot easily change. As

spoken words are repeated from mouth, they are easily varied and wrested from their original meaning. This may be done even without design, under the blinding influence of passion, prejudice, interest, imagination, and ignorance, or by the lapse of memory; but the faithful characters impressed on paper remain unchanged to check the wandering fancy, and recall the erring memory. It is this unfailing fidelity of letters which allows us to hold familiar communication with souls long departed, without superstition, or the sin of necromancy. The student may sit down among his books, and by their medium call up the spirits of the good and wise of old; he may receive their communications as surely and clearly as if he heard their voices, and saw them sitting by his side. This reflection is thus beautifully wrought out by an accomplished scholar of our own country:

“ I am alone, and yet  
In the still solitude there is a rush  
Around me, as were met  
A crowd of viewless wings—  
I know you now.  
Ye hover o’er the page  
Ye traced in ancient days, with glorious thought  
For many a distant age.”<sup>1</sup>

We will not cry, All honor to the man that invented writing, for it is disputed whether it be in truth a human invention. We know that God was man’s earliest teacher, and He gave him the power of language, and, as we think, language itself, for his first outfit. “For my part,” says Plato, “I hold it to be above all a most evident truth, that the first names have been assigned to things by a power above that of man, and from this it comes that they are so

<sup>1</sup> Bethune. Night Study.

just.”<sup>1</sup> In like manner others have questioned whether the knowledge of letters is not directly derived from the same adorable source. If it be so, and our heart leans strongly to it, then to that high source alone we raise our hymn of gratitude. All glory to Thee! true Father and earliest teacher of our race, who, in creating man, didst not only kindle in his soul the light of reason, but feed its infant flame with the first rudiments of truth. Glory to Thee, again! that, with the gift of speech, didst put in motion the great current of tradition, which still flows on, now swelling, now falling, now gathering, now spreading, but never failing. And glory to Thee, once more! divine and gentle schoolmaster, whose sacred finger—may we believe it?—first traced out the mysteries of the alphabet, and taught us how to pin the fleet wings of thought to outward symbols. At least, it is a delightful thought also that, as Thou art the fount of all tradition, and the Father of all science, so do we find Thee the earliest author in our world of letters, and hail Thy sacred Law where it lies laid up, the oldest volume among the archives of the nations.

We have dwelt so long upon this distinction between oral and written tradition, only that we may clear away any confusion in our ideas, and understand our terms well. Practically speaking, there is no occasion for rivalry between the two. They are the best of friends, and seldom found apart. They are not parallel rivers, but belong to one great stream of tradition, which receives its tributaries as it flows on, and sends out its temporary bayous. Any matter of oral tradition is soon caught up and put upon record; and, on the other hand, what men read in books they make matter of conversation and instruction, and so toss it into the current of oral tradition. For instance;

<sup>1</sup> In Crat.

Catholic theology preserves carefully this distinction between two species of divine tradition, but it must not by any means be inferred that any articles of primitive doctrine have come down to our day without finding their way into sacred literature. In the language of Catholics, by written tradition are ordinarily meant all those divine precepts and doctrines which were committed to writing in the time of the Apostles, and delivered by them in this form to the Church; by oral tradition all that was taught by them *viva voce*, and remained for the time unwritten. That a vast amount of instruction fell in this way from the lips of our Lord and his Apostles, and was echoed by the whole corps of Christian teachers, who can doubt? And since book-making was then comparatively rare, and Christians a persecuted class, a considerable period must have elapsed before the whole substance of this oral teaching was gathered up by Christian authors. We repeat, however, it would be a bold conjecture to suppose that any of these threads of primitive tradition have come down to the present day without attaching themselves to some written monument.

This chapter has perhaps been sufficiently developed to answer the purpose we have in view. We trust that the meaning of tradition is made clear, and its value established. If so, our gentle reader is able to understand how and why an appeal to tradition is the fair and direct way to prove the authenticity of a book, and to appreciate our argument hitherto. Who cannot see, by this broad daylight of tradition, on what sure and firm foundations the Old Testament Scriptures are grounded? Who doubts longer of their authenticity? Shall we have written testimony? Pagan literature is too young to say much of them, but they testify to each other. They constitute, as we divide them now, a library of forty-six books, written

by an unbroken succession of authors, illustrating the history of a great nation for the space of more than 1,500 years. So interwoven are they the while, and so dependent on each other, that one would be inexplicable without the rest, like a lone column in the desert; nor can all be rejected without leaving a great and a still living nation unaccounted for in history. Shall we ask for oral testimony? It comes forward to us through a countless series of generations, reverberating through the long corridor of Hebrew history, and spreading in waves of acclamation from Judea to the earth's end.

Shall we call up these witnesses? God of glory! it is a magnificent sight to see them march in through so many intervening centuries to give their testimony. Hear that deep low murmur of an enslaved multitude in Egypt! Listen to the tread of that host of pilgrims marching through the desert! They halt at the foot of a mountain to rest;—and now they move on again, bearing in front a tabernacle with the tables of the Law. The Jordan rolls back its flood, and they walk through. Their great leader and lawgiver is left sleeping in a lone valley behind them, but they bring along the precious legacy he left, namely, five books containing their own history and the laws of their state and religion. And now their martial tramp is heard, and the din of arms, as they drive before them the inhabitants of Canaan, and enter into possession of the promised land. These wars also are chronicled, and added to the archives of the nation. Time passes on with alternating peace and war. Magistrates rule over them under the name of judges, now a warlike chief, and now a peaceful priest or prophet, and to these kings succeed. Great cities are built, and a magnificent Temple, but always, while the remembrance is fresh and green, every public event is noted in the public archives, with

many details of tribes and families, the boundaries of land, the geographical features of the territory, and the social manners of the people in town and country. Their sins and vices are not forgotten in that faithful history. Look ! how they hang their heads for shame, and confess the chronicles that testify against them ! The nation divides, and henceforth the stream of tradition flows on in separate channels. Ten tribes erect a separate kingdom, and a schismatic worship, and the first blow of divine justice falls on them ; but, even after their final overthrow and dispersion, the only remnant left is found clinging to the records of their great Lawgiver. Juda lingers a little longer, but her day of retribution is at hand. Dark clouds gather from the east, and overshadow the holy land and the sacred city. Wo ! to the sinful nation ! The storm breaks, rages, passes—and behold, the daughter of Sion is left as a covert in a vineyard, as a city laid waste. Seventy years of bitter penance follow, and the captives return to found another Jerusalem, and a new Temple. Their library is now increased with the history of their sorrows, and the return of their consolations. It is a bright opening, but it only opens a period of decline, of struggles and humiliations ending with an iron yoke. The children of Juda pass through it with many forebodings, or rather with a desperate and melancholy courage, bearing with them their sacred books the while, as if seeking for a friendly hand to confide them to. But what array comes here ? Who are these millions that advance to meet them, with glad shouts, and the quick light step of youth ? It is the Christian host coming up to receive the sacred deposit, and take up the long march of tradition. Now east, and west, and north, and south, beneath the banner of the Cross, they bear the divine books joyfully on ; nation after nation falls in to swell the line, and carry

on that long and unceasing procession. And so will it be until the world ends. In the whole range of human history there is no monument so ancient, so well attested, so venerable as those divine Scriptures, no history so widespread, so constant, so clear as the old time-honored tradition that brings them down.



## CHAPTER XII.

SUSY BRINN.

“ What more changeful than the sea?  
But over his great tides  
Fidelity presides;  
And this light-hearted maiden constant is as he.”  
WORDSWORTH.

AMONG my favorites in the neighborhood is little Susy Brinn. She makes some pretension to have grown to years of discretion, bows gravely to young gentlemen in the streets, and expects them to touch their hats. But when she visits me, which is frequently and without ceremony, she comes bounding in like a kitten. I will not attempt to give a portrait of her. I have no recollection of any feature in particular. I can't say that I ever noticed any one in particular, for they all play together, and the motion is perpetual. Her nose—well, I don't think it is Roman; I can't say it isn't pug. Indeed it is only by presumption that I know she has any. Her eyes are black, or blue, or gray, or what you like—what she likes rather, for it is my opinion that she can change the color of them at will. I know they are revolving and throw both shot and shell. It is a beautiful face—that I am sure of. The lights and shadows upon it are ever shifting; the mouth is up to anything within the range of human expression, and yet performs no more than its own fair part. She can call up a dimple—I verily believe it—anywhere and whenever

she likes, and a dozen at a time ; or, if offended, she can summon to the front face one round, projecting, inflammatory bossy pout, resolving the whole head into a war-like fortress, her two eyes standing like startled sentinels over a sally-port. I don't throw this up to Susy as a defect. It is a power she has, not a passion. She is a good girl, knowing perfectly well what she is about, and none the worse, as Sister Becky expresses it, for having "a snap to her."

On the occasion to which I introduce my reader, Miss Susan, for a wonder, entered my study very quietly and hesitatingly, with a smile on her face, but cut off about half length.

"Sit down, Uncle Bird," said she, "I want to tell you something. Not there ! In the arm-chair. I want to get behind you, where I can whisper in your ear without seeing your saucy eyes."

"Well, Susy," I said, after waiting a reasonable while, "what's the rumpus ?"

"Oh, dear ! I don't know what to say."

"Don't say anything then, of course."

"It's about——"

"Walter Manly."

"Yes ; how did you know that ?"

"What has he been saying to you ?"

"Did you hear me say he had said anything ?"

"What answer did you make to it ?"

"I didn't make any."

"What answer do you intend to make ?"

"I don't see how I can have him. There's no use in talking about it."

"Why not ? Let me tell you, young lady, he'll bring your value to the market any day."

"I know that, saucebox ; but I can't have him."

"What's the reason?"

"You know well enough. In the first place, I don't think I shall ever marry any one."

"Ay, ay! The other reason now, if you please."

"Why, you know he don't believe anything."

"Well."

"Well!!"

"I know there is generally danger in unequal marriages of this sort; but the danger can oftentimes be avoided. Walter is not a scoffer, and will do all that is reasonable. He must engage to leave you free to practise your religion, and to bring up your children in the same. And all you have to do then is to try and lead him to the true faith."

"I have done what I can already. I asked him to let Father Ryan baptize him, and he laughed."

"I don't wonder he laughed. You little ninny!"

"He said he wouldn't like to stand sponsor for himself, but if Father Ryan would take him for a baby, and I would carry him to the font——oh! wasn't I a fool?"

"You are not the first, Susy. Besides, I know that Walter was baptized long ago."

"I have been warned against him, Uncle Bird. They say such marriages always turn out bad, because it's undutiful and wicked."

"How can it be wicked, when the Church permits it expressly, prescribing the conditions?"

"They say that she only tolerates it."

"I believe, indeed, that she does not favor mixed marriages, as a general thing. But she admits that good reasons may exist for them sometimes, otherwise she would not provide for such cases."

"What would be a good reason?"

"Do you love him, Susy?"

"No."

"Let's have no nonsense, child!"

"Yes."

"Very much?"

"Why, yes."

"Would it make you very unhappy to give him up?"

"Yes, it would," faltered Susy, the tears beginning to rain on my head.

"And him unhappy too?"

"I don't know. He said it would." Poor Robin Redbreast! My chair was trembling with the panting behind it.

"Well, then, in the name of the Ten Thousand Virgins, take him, and run away with you!" said I, playing cross, for fear of playing the baby. "Why should you both be miserable for nothing?"

"Father Ryan won't marry us."

"He will. He has more common sense than those geese and ganders that have been talking to you."

"Uncle Bird!"

"What, dear?"

"Suppose I wait, and see if he won't come round himself."

"Certainly. I see no need of hurry. How long will he wait?"

"Probably until I get ready," said Susy, with a show of importance.

"I am not so sure of that. But look here, my girl, not a word of such expectations to Walter!"

"Why not?"

"Because he is a noble-spirited youth, and if only the idea of bartering his convictions——"

"Oh, no! no!"

"Put off the marriage, if you and he can agree upon

it; but accept him at once upon the simple conditions which I have named to you, and nothing else. You may send him to me for an explanation of them, if you like."

"Well."

"And mind me, girl; remember you have arrived at the dignified age of sixteen."

"Almost seventeen, if you please, Sir. What then?"

"Be discreet, Miss!"

"Did you ever! What impertinence! Do you think no one has any discretion except country Squires?"

"Well, run away now, child, I'm tired of you."

"I won't go yet. I want you to grant me a favor. Will you, Uncle Bird? Dear Uncle Bird, say yes."

"I think very likely."

"Say yes."

"What is it?"

"Let me come to the Saturday evening readings."

"No."

"Yes, do!"

"Not for the world. It would spoil everything."

"I knew you wouldn't. It's like you. But look out for me. Blue Beard! do you see that?"

"Yes; I can just see it." It was nothing but her clenched hand, about the size of one of those ivory fists that we see on umbrella handles.

"Tremble, then! And mind me, I'll be there yet, in spite of you. Good-by!" The fierce little hand opened, and waved a kiss.

"Good-by!"

## CHAPTER XIII.

### GOOD CHARACTER OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

"If in the course  
And process of this time, you can report,  
And prove it too, against mine honor aught,  
Turn me away."—*Henry VIII.*

WE hold it now for a conceded point, that the Old Testament Scriptures are authentic. They are no forgeries; they were written by the authors whose names they bear; and, where no author's name appears, we must refer the origin of the record to the epoch indicated upon its face. It is also established that they have come down to us unimpaired, that is to say, without any essential alteration, addition, or mutilation. Another and very distinct question remains to be settled. Can we believe their contents? Are they true? In answering this, we have first a few words to say by way of introduction.

One of the first requisites for a book, to ensure it a favorable reception, is that it come to us with a good character. We are not accustomed to give our confidence to strangers, unless they come well recommended. A new book, like a young man, has a reputation to acquire; and on the other hand, an old book, like an old man, is bound to have a good character already established, and must expect to be looked upon with suspicion, if it has not. This is especially true when it appears as a witness to important facts which touch our interests closely. Now the

Old Testament is no stranger among us, nor has it a character to build up at this day. It does not stand knocking at our doors, like the travelling beggars we see every day, each with a long tale of his own, which may be true or not, sustained by a dirty certificate of some one we never heard of. On the contrary, no face is more familiar. We have seen it on the chimney corner, smiling at us by the light of the fireside, ever since we can remember, and so have our forefathers for many a generation. Not only generations of men, but generations of nations have been familiar with it, read it over and over, discussed it, and compared its statements with every item of knowledge in the whole range of human science. Long has it kept its place on the library shelf, while many generations of volumes have appeared and disappeared from its side. They had their day, and then, as science progressed, they have fallen—the most of them—into their dotage, babbling of long forgotten theories, until they were cast aside to make room for younger books. Not so with this old Patriarch of books. There it stands yet, as fresh in its looks as ever, and as honored by all. Say—does it not seem to smile strangely yet sweetly on us, and call the color to our faces, while we hold trial upon it at this late day? It seems like a mockery to inquire into its character. But it has a character, and what is it? Come, my gentle friend, I will be the interrogating lawyer, and I call you to the stand for my witness. Answer candidly.

*Q.* Are you acquainted with that volume commonly called the Old Testament?

*Ans.* I have seen it often, and often heard it spoken of.

*Q.* Is it a book pretty well known?

*Ans.* It is certainly; no book more so.

*Q.* Has it a decided reputation, or not?

*Ans.* It has.

*Q.* Is that reputation good, or bad ?

*Ans.* I must confess, it is good.

*Q.* Are you acquainted, in particular, with its common reputation among men for truth ?

*Ans.* I think I am.

*Q.* Is its reputation good or bad in that respect ?

*Ans.* It is unquestionably good.

*Q.* And a hundred years ago—can you tell me how its general reputation for veracity stood then ?

*Ans.* It was good.

*Q.* Was it equally good 500 years ago ?

*Ans.* It was.

*Q.* And 1,000 years ago, too ?

*Ans.* Yes.

*Q.* So far as you know, was it always equally good ?

*Ans.* Yes, always ; so far as my knowledge of it extends back.

The Bible therefore comes before us with a fixed and definite character, and that a good one. It is not on trial before the world. The civilized world has passed judgment upon its claims long ago, and its authority has been established. If we are not satisfied with this judgment, we may pass upon it once more in our own little court, but our judgment will have weight only so far as the jurisdiction of that little court goes. The character of the Old Testament will remain undisturbed by our proceedings. We do not mean by these remarks to discourage our gentle reader from full and fair investigation. By no means. We lay down simply an old rule of the courts, by which the book we are examining is entitled, at the outset, to a very commanding position. It is what the lawyers call possession, and even something more ; it is prescription. It is not merely that kind of prescription where an obscure title is supposed to be good in default



of an opposite claim, but it is a clear title which the judgment of ages has pronounced good upon its original merits. And now, my gentle friend, take the stand once more. We shall see what is the full value of that possession. We shall be made to feel that, according to all rules of modesty and good manners, we ought not to put this time-honored old book upon its trial, except with our caps in our hands.

*Q.* Is the Old Testament, think you, really very old?

*Ans.* Yes; that we have already seen proved.

*Q.* It has had a long and eventful life, no doubt, and passed through many and various hands.

*Ans.* Yes; "*Qui mores hominum multorum vidit et urbes.*" Jews and Gentiles, Greeks and Romans, Gauls and Teutons, Celts and Saxons, and what not.

*Q.* Have any of these nations been highly civilized and lettered?

*Ans.* Yes, none more so.

*Q.* Have its contents, think you, been closely studied?

*Ans.* Yes.

*Q.* And critically?

*Ans.* Yes.

*Q.* Is there much historical matter in it?

*Ans.* Yes, an abundance. Besides the account of the earliest origin of mankind, and the peopling of the earth, we have the origin of many distinct nations; for instance, of the Hebrews, the Assyrians, the Arabians, and others. It contains also a vast amount of historical data concerning the Egyptians, Persians, Medes, Tyrians, Greeks, Romans, &c.; the nature of their governments, the names of their princes, their wars and revolutions, their commerce, their customs, their social manners, their systems of religion, and the titles given to their deities.

*Q.* Have historians occupied themselves much with these scriptural accounts?

*Ans.* They certainly have.

*Q.* And found them trustworthy?

*Ans.* Well, I believe so, at least so far as the authors speak of things which belong to their own times and within their own reach. There are many things, of course, which cannot be verified by means of any other historical authority; for example, the early part of the Book of Genesis. What means the author of that book had to collect and verify his details of the primeval age, I cannot say. Unless, as you would probably maintain, those things were supernaturally revealed, there must attach a great deal of uncertainty to his account of that period, as well as to all the primitive traditions of mankind.

*Q.* We can afford to waive that question for the present. Is there much of geography in the Old Testament?

*Ans.* Much indeed.

*Q.* What?

*Ans.* The countries occupied by these nations at different epochs are described, and the boundaries often defined. The natural products of different soils, of the mountains, rivers, plains, deserts, and the islands of the sea are frequently introduced.

*Q.* Have geographers had these things in consideration?

*Ans.* Doubtless.

*Q.* There must be also many details especially interesting to archæologists?

*Ans.* Oh! yes; references to national customs, dress, manners, &c., *ad infinitum*.

*Q.* There must be something said, now and then, of

natural history, of the fauna and flora of these eastern countries.

*Ans.* Certainly. Beasts, birds, fish, and insects are introduced, albeit incidentally, and their localities and habits described, so as to furnish much interesting matter for the naturalist. The author of Job must in his day have been a close observer of nature, and King Solomon could have handed in valuable contributions to our American Congress of Science.

*Q.* Do you find any account of griffins, phœnixes, dragons, or such like animals, unknown to science, roaming about among the woods and wilds of Scripture?

*Ans.* I do not know of any, unless such as are allegorical or miraculous.

*Q.* Here and there a mermaid perhaps, or a sea serpent, or at least some fairy swinging on a buttercup.

*Ans.* No, except the Old Serpent in Eden, an allegorical one, I take it, not belonging to natural history; and also the miraculous fiery serpents.

*Q.* It would not be considered strange, nevertheless, to find fabulous animals mentioned seriously in other ancient books of history, if such things were supposed to exist in the age of the author, and if they were not related on the immediate authority of the author as eye-witness. Are the seasons all right—the movements of the elements, the winds, rains, storms, all as they should be according to meteorology—at least as one living then and there would naturally describe them?

*Ans.* They are, so far as I know.

*Q.* I have been much struck with a passage which I met with lately, and noted, in the "Cosmos" of Alexander Humboldt. I consider it a very valuable piece of testimony, occurring, as it does, in so recent a work by a living

author of such high reputation for science, and withal so little hampered by faith.

"As descriptions of nature, the writings of the Old Testament are a faithful reflection of the character of the country in which they were composed, of the alternations of barrenness and fruitfulness, and of the Alpine forests by which the land of Palestine was characterized. They describe in their regular succession the relations of the climate, the manners of this people of herdsmen, and their hereditary aversion to agricultural pursuits. The epic or historical narratives are marked by a graceful simplicity, almost more unadorned than those of Herodotus, and most true to nature; a point on which the unanimous testimony of modern travellers may be received as conclusive.

"Their lyrical poetry is more adorned, and develops a rich and animated conception of the life of nature. It might almost be said that one single psalm (the 104th)<sup>1</sup> represents the image of the whole Cosmos. \* \* \* We are astonished to find, in a lyrical poem of such a limited compass, the whole universe—the heavens and the earth—sketched with a few bold touches.

"Similar views of the Cosmos occur repeatedly in the Psalms, and more fully perhaps in the 37th chapter of the ancient, if not ante-Mosaic book of Job. The meteorological processes which take place in the atmosphere, the formation and solution of vapor according to the changing direction of the wind, the play of its colors, the generation of hail and of the rolling thunder, are described with individualizing accuracy, and many questions are propounded which we, in the present state of our physical knowledge, may indeed be able to express under more scientific definitions, but scarcely to answer satisfactorily."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The 103d Ps. of the Vulgate.

<sup>2</sup> Cosmos, vol. ii, p. 412 of Bohn's edition.

But we must not forget the Lawyers. They are very keen at finding a flaw in any species of evidence. How has the Bible stood with them. Does it stand impeached?

*Ans.* I believe not.

*Q.* What is that book we always find lying on the clerk's table in the court rooms, with its cover almost kissed off by the witnesses?

*Ans.* It is the Bible.

*Q.* Why does the witness swear by that instead of some other book? Is it not recognized in Law as above all books the book of truth?

*Ans.* That is the reason, doubtless.

*Q.* A most remarkable thing it is indeed, that a book which treads so largely on the remains of historical and natural science, and has been exposed to the criticism of the learned for so many ages, should maintain so good a character for truth and accuracy. One would say, according to the ordinary laws of human infirmity, that in so large a volume, however honest the authors may be, mistakes would abound. The Bible surely is a favored book. True, its phraseology shows that the authors were not in advance of their times in respect to the secular sciences; they thought that the earth stood still, and all the other stars moved round it, and that of these the sun and moon were the largest, etc. We look for this in old books; we should suspect them if we did not find it. Honesty is not impeached by such imperfections, and inspiration is not concerned in such questions. The truthful character of the Bible remains unaffected. Time, that slowest, severest, surest of critics, has stamped upon it the reputation of a faithful witness, and after so many ages that reputation is not like to be lost. Oh! Time is a great tester of truth; the watchful years are terrible detectives, and dog the heels of error with an unrelenting pursuit. False papers

will not serve us long, nor is there any secret place where a contraband tale can long lie hid.

"Truth will arise,  
Though all the world doth hide it from men's eyes."

If our principle be true, the good character which the Old Testament has so long enjoyed is no slight evidence in its favor. It is now in the vigor of a green old age, and that golden glory with which its leaves are tinted is Time's tribute to its truthfulness.

"Is it all right," I asked, as Walter ceased reading.

"Yes, Uncle, I like your argument very well so far as it goes. What is Aunt's opinion?"

"If you want my opinion," said Becky, "you shall have it. I love the Bible. I loved it before I knew what it was, for I saw my dear mother kiss it often, and I kissed it after her. I knew it was something holy, and thought it might have come down from Heaven just as it was, cover and all. Now that I know more of it, I love it all the better."

"Do you understand it all, Aunt?"

"I understand enough for me."

"Can you prove it to be true?"

"No, Walter, brother will prove that for you."

"But you—how do you know it to be true?"

"Child! don't try to fool me," returned Becky, balancing herself upon her dignity: "the things that I know best are those that I can give the least account of. I know that the earth is green, and the sky is blue, and God is good, but I couldn't prove it to you, perhaps. When I read the Bible I skip what I don't understand, but what I do understand is as clear to me as the blue sky or the green grass. I do believe there was a place in my

heart from the beginning, made on purpose for it ; otherwise, how could I understand so much of it, and know it so surely ? Oh ! Walter, there is more in the Bible of that kind of truth that don't want proving than was ever found in a book of man's make."

The young man was not a little impressed. "I think," he said, "there is a Bible in your heart, Aunt Becky."

"Yes, Walter ; at least the God of the Bible is there, and she knows His style wherever she finds it."

## CHAPTER XIV.

### TRUTHFULNESS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. FACTS OF A PUBLIC NATURE.

"Neque enim in angulo quidquam horum gestum est."

*Actus Apostolorum.*

WE now pass on to the direct proofs of the truthfulness of the Old Testament, not indeed of the supernatural doctrines revealed in it, but of the facts and events of past history to which it testifies. These being established, the truth of its religious doctrine follows so inevitably that we need scarcely be at the trouble of stating the argument.

Doubtless, the reader is prepared to appreciate how well the whole force of all that traditional testimony which we have adduced in favor of the authenticity of these ancient writings applies also to their historical truthfulness, and we may be spared the weariness of repetition. The same tradition which has transmitted to us the books, has transmitted to us also our faith in their contents. The Hebrews who lived when the authors lived, and were contemporary also to the events related, are at once the original receivers, and the original believers of the sacred Scriptures, and we are in both respects their heirs. If they were deceived in believing, then so are we; if their belief was well founded, then ours is also. The only task, therefore, we need undertake in this part, is to show that the first into whose hands these records fell, and who be-



lieved them, could not possibly be deceived. This being demonstrated, it follows that the records are true, and that we are bound to believe them too. How say you, brother; is this the right programme? Well then, all aboard! There's nothing like starting with a fair understanding.

There are three classes of facts which may be contained in a historical book: first, public facts, to which there are many other witnesses besides the author; secondly, private facts where he alone is witness, or at best a few persons with him; and thirdly, facts of past history which have come down to his time, and are incorporated in his work. All these three classes are found in the Old Testament, and for convenience's sake we shall consider them separately, as there is some variety in the motives of credibility upon which they obtain our confidence.

First then—facts of public notoriety. These do not rest upon the authority of the author that chronicles them. Historians and annalists are not autocrats in their department. They are not masters of the public mind, free to dispose of facts at their pleasure, and restrained only by their own conscience. A philosophical poet of America tells us that all authors, even the greatest geniuses, are only representative men, the advanced disciples of the age they live in.

“All thoughts that mould the age begin  
Deep down within the primitive soul,  
And from the many slowly upward win  
To one who grasps the whole.”<sup>1</sup>

Most especially and plainly is this true in the department of history. The object of the historian is simply to transfer to paper what is already registered in the public memory. We speak of history in the true sense of the word, as it was understood in the good old times from Moses

<sup>1</sup> Lowell.

down to Froissart. We abominate these philosophical nostrums administered to us nowadays under the name of history, of which Robertson's Charles V. is a type, and which substitute essays for honest annals, and the author's theories for facts. It is paint, padding, lacing, and crinoline, introduced into history, not directly falsifying the facts, but distorting, disguising, and coloring them. Causes are imputed to events, and motives to the actors, according to the idiosyncrasies of the author, and the prejudices of his school or party. "It is the true office of history," says Lord Bacon, "to represent the events themselves together with the counsels, and to leave the observations and conclusions thereupon to the liberty and faculty of every man's judgment; but mixtures are things irregular, whereof no man can define."<sup>1</sup> And yet, even these philosophizing historians of our day cannot invent facts with impunity. All they can do is to throw the color of their own prejudices upon them. The world does not receive its knowledge of history from authors. Historians are but clerks of the public, to note down for better remembrance what the public knows already. To that public too, they must appeal for a certificate to the fidelity of their labors. The authority we attribute to a good book of history is not inherent to it, but is stamped upon it afterward by the public approval; just as the power of a deed is not in the written document, nor in the conveyancer who draws it, but in the act of the grantor, who puts his hand and seal to it. The historian, when he sets down the current events or received traditions of his own day, is surrounded by a host of competent witnesses, and if his history is satisfactory to them, they hand it down with their approbation to the next generation, which passes it on countersigned to a third, and so on to the end. We need not be

<sup>1</sup> On the advancement of Learning. Book ii.

troubled much about the maker of a note, if the endorsement is good, and for the same reason we need not be suspicious of the historian of a nation, if the nation itself stands sponsor for him.

A lawyer who should call in question the authority of an ancient volume of law reports, on the ground that little or nothing is known of the reporter, and that therefore no security exists for his truthfulness, would be laughed at by both bench and bar. They would tell him that the reports do not derive their authority from the reporter, but from the value always attached to them by the legal tribunals and the profession generally, for whose use they were published, and who were most competent to judge of their accuracy. The decisions of the courts are matters of notoriety among the bar, and the reporter would have little room to fabricate. Now, reporters are nothing else but historians or annalists to the courts, and the same principle applies to historians of every class.

Let us apply it to the writers of sacred history. In all matters of public notoriety contained in the Old Testament, the contemporaries of each writer were safe judges of their truth and accuracy. If they received his account as true it is true. They could not be deceived. Let us take a few examples; and we will select purposely those which the skeptic accounts most difficult of belief. Moses relates that the Israelites were in his day slaves in Egypt, and that, by most manifest miracles in the form of widespread and distressing plagues, wrought publicly by his own hand under divine direction and help, the Egyptian king was forced to let them depart from his territories—that soon changing his mind, the king pursued and overtook them at a ford of the Red Sea—that, he (Moses) having struck the waters with his rod, they gathered backward on either hand, leaving a dry path for the Hebrew

hosts to pass through, and that, all having safely arrived at the farther shore, a blow with the same rod brought back the walled waters, and overwhelmed the pursuing Egyptians. Now the Hebrews of Moses' day knew very well whether all this was true or not. They were as incapable of being imposed upon in the premises by Moses, as they were of confederating with him to concoct a lie of such mammoth proportions.

In the third month of their departure, this pilgrim host arrived at Mount Sinai, to the eastward of the sea, at the foot of which they halted. Here the Prophet was called up to confer with God upon the mountain, which conference took place amidst such manifest tokens of the divine presence that the multitude below were filled with terror. Descending from this mountain the Prophet presented his countrymen with the Ten Commandments, consisting of a short compendium of the principles of natural law, and also an entire code of statutes, moral, religious, and civil, which had been given him by God to form the national constitution of this his privileged and chosen people. Our reader will agree, that the Hebrews who marched with Moses could remember an event like this, and that no imaginable degree of veneration for their Prophet could make them swallow so strange a tale if they preserved no recollection of it themselves.

The miracle of dividing the waters was repeated at the passage of the Jordan when they finally emerged from the desert and entered the promised land of Palestine, and a monument was erected on the bank of the river to commemorate the event, and mark the place of the miraculous ford. This, together with the capture of Jericho by the miraculous fall of its walls which occurred near by, and at the same time, was duly chronicled by Josue, and accepted and handed down as the true account. Miracles as

public and apparent were operated by the sacred Ark during the wars of this people of God with the ancient inhabitants of Palestine, and recorded by Samuel. We have further on the killing of the giant champion of Gath, by David with a sling, in the presence of the two armies, the wonderful escape of the three Hebrew youths from the fiery furnace, and of Daniel from the cave of lions—all events of the greatest national interest, the highest religious significance, and all equally public and notorious. In fine, the Old Testament presents a complete chain of such extraordinary events, beginning with the origin of the Hebrew dispensation so called, and continuing down until the comparatively modern times of the Macchabees, when, in the Temple and surrounded by his guards, the sacrilegious Heliodorus was publicly scourged by the angels.<sup>1</sup>

Such grand miracles were necessary, it would seem, to confirm in their faith and recall from their heathenizing tendencies this wayward and obstinate people; but who can fail to feel that, the far-extending vision of God looking forward to after times of extravagant philosophical pride, his design was also to place the records of his older dispensation high out of reach above the sneering critics of our Christian epoch. But let us carry on our argument to a conclusion.

We have already said it—the grand events above enumerated are all preëminently of that class which we call facts of public notoriety, and which cannot with impunity be invented or misstated by any author. It is therefore not necessary to take into consideration here the

<sup>1</sup> If, as some knowing infidels throw out, the Old Testament miracles belong to the fabulous ages, then nearly the whole history of this great and populous commonwealth, from its origin until far gone in its decline, is fabulous. And, forsooth, this fabulous period includes the construction of its magnificent temples, its regal palaces, and its cities and commercial emporiums. God deliver us from infidel wisdom!

personal characters of Moses, Josue, Samuel, and the other Prophets who have recorded them. It is enough that their records were received with confidence by their countrymen and contemporaries, who in such facts could not be deceived. Since then all the most characteristic events of the Old Testament are of this public kind, a great part of our task is already accomplished by an argument as unanswerable as it is direct and simple. If the skeptic is not yet prepared to acknowledge these sacred records to be all true, he is bound to confess that they are mainly true.

"In truth," said Walter, looking up over the manuscript from which he has been reading, "it seems hard to escape that conclusion."

A. "Do you confess so much, my boy?" said I joyfully; "God be praised! Such a confession, however, is pregnant with consequences, as will become apparent by reading a little further."

These facts of national notoriety are precisely such as the friends of Revelation rely on to prove the divinity of the Old Testament dispensation. To escape the tediousness of repetition, we will take new examples of the same kind, for they abound. Take notice how the ancient Prophets made their miracles *test questions* to prove their divine mission.

"Moses therefore took the rod which was before the Lord, as he had commanded him, and, having gathered together the multitude before the rock, he said to them: 'Hear ye rebellious and incredulous! Can we bring you forth water out of this rock?' And when Moses had lifted up his hand and struck the rock twice with the rod, there came forth water in great abundance, so that the people and their cattle drank."<sup>1</sup>

Could any fact be more thoroughly public in its charac-

<sup>1</sup> Numb. xx, 9-12.

ter than this miracle? Could any miracle be more conclusive to the divine mission of Moses? It is said that nothing has tended more to reconcile the Algerines upon the northern borders of the Great Desert to the rule of their French conquerors, than to see them pierce the soil with deep Artesian borings, and bring up fresh water where water was never known before. No wonder that the rebellious murmurs of the ancient Israelites should be hushed when they saw water flow out of a barren rock, not through a triumph of science, after long and wearisome boring, but by a manifest intervention of God, at the touch of a light wand in the hand of Moses. Could they fail to credit the whole doctrine of such a man, and to receive his entire system as surely divine? And if the miracle was proof enough for them, is it not enough for us? Does an argument get feeble by growing old?

Take another example, where, in like manner, the miracle was one of public notoriety having the whole nation for witnesses, and a test question also of the divine authority of the Prophet. Dathan and Abiron, demagogues and mutineers in the Hebrew camp, had raised the question: "And when they had stood up against Moses and Aaron they said: Let it be enough for you that all the multitude consisteth of holy ones, and the Lord is among them. Why lift you up yourselves above the people of the Lord?" Moses settled the question by a miracle.

"He said to the multitude: Depart from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest you be involved in their sins. And when they were departed from their tents round about, Dathan and Abiron coming out stood in the entry of their pavilions with their wives and children, and all the people.

"And Moses said: *By this you shall know that the*

*Lord hath sent me to do all things that you see, and that I have not forged them of my own head.* If these men die the common death of men, and if they be visited by a plague wherewith others also are wont to be visited, the Lord did not send me. But if the Lord do a new thing, and the earth opening her mouth swallow them down, and all things that belong to them, and they go down alive into hell, you shall know that they have blasphemed the Lord." A plain statement this of the question to be tested. And now we have the conclusion.

"And immediately as he had made an end of speaking, the earth broke asunder under their feet, and opening her mouth devoured them with their tents and all their substance. And they went down alive into hell, the ground closing upon them, and they perished from among the people. But all Israel, that was standing round about, fled at the cry of them that were perishing, saying: Lest perhaps the earth swallow us up also."<sup>1</sup>

Now then, taking for granted what we have already proved, namely, that all that class of scriptural facts which form the subject of this chapter—the facts of public notoriety—must be credited as true, how little remains for us to do! These facts constitute the great characteristic events of sacred history. They are often miraculous like those we have specified. They prove the divine mission of the Prophets who thus appealed to God to demonstrate their authority and corroborate their doctrines by supernatural signs. In fine, they suffice alone to demonstrate the truth and divinity of the Old Testament dispensation.

It will not be amiss here to compare this "Book of books" with its rival books of pretended revelation. When have impostors pointed to manifest miracles to prove their claims, and challenged the testimony of the public to

<sup>1</sup> Numb. xvi.



prove the miracles ? Let us look, for instance, at the Koran, which stands preëminently at the head of its class, like Lucifer among the rebel angels. Passing over the fabulous absurdities of the book, its anachronisms, and its gross mistakes in matters of history, geography, and physical science,<sup>1</sup> we find it utterly wanting in those bold appeals to facts of notoriety by which the sacred authors of the Old Testament are distinguished. Mohammed declared that he did not come to work miracles. He claimed for the Koran a superhuman beauty of style, and this is the only sort of miracle he appeals to for its inspiration, or to prove his own mission.

"This Koran," he says in the tenth chapter, entitled Jonas, "could not have been composed by any except God ; but it is a confirmation of that which was revealed before it, and an explanation of the Scripture—there is no doubt thereof—sent down from the Lord of all creatures. Will they say : Mohammed hath forged it ? Answer : Bring therefore a chapter like unto it, and call whom you may to your assistance besides God, if ye speak truth." This pitiful challenge he repeats several times in the same words,<sup>2</sup> and it constitutes at the present day the Moham-medan argument for the Koran.

Now hear the manly challenge of Moses—"Hear, O Israel, the ceremonies and judgments which I speak in your ears this day ; learn them and fulfil them in work !

"The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. He made not the covenant with our fathers, but with us face to face in the mount, out of the midst of the fire. I was the mediator, and stood between the Lord and you at that time, to show you his words, for you feared the fire, and went not up into the mountain. And he said :

<sup>1</sup> Bergier. Art. Mahometisme.

<sup>2</sup> See chap. ii, entitled "The Cow," and chap. xi, "Hud."

I am the Lord thy God, &c. (Here follow the Ten Commandments.)

“These words the Lord spoke to all the multitude of you in the mountain, out of the midst of the fire and the cloud and the darkness, with a loud voice, adding nothing more; and he wrote them in two tables of stone, which he delivered unto me.”<sup>1</sup>

“Ask of the days of old that have been before thy time, from the day that God created man upon the earth, from one end of heaven to the other end thereof, if ever there was done the like thing, or it hath been known at any time that a people should hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and lived. If God ever did so as to go and take to himself a nation out of the midst of nations, by temptations, signs, and wonders, by fight and a strong hand, and stretched out arm, and horrible visions, according to all the things that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes, that you might know that the Lord he is God, and there is no other beside him.

“From heaven he made you to hear his voice that he might teach you, and upon earth he showed you his exceeding great fire, and you heard his words out of the midst of the fire.”<sup>2</sup>

“Therefore love the Lord your God, and observe his precepts, and ceremonies, and commandments at all times. Know this day the things that your children know not, who saw not the chastisements of the Lord your God, his great doings, and strong hand, and stretched out arm; the signs and works which he did in the midst of Egypt to King Pharaoh, and to all his land; and to all the host of the Egyptians, and to their horses and chariots; how the waters of the Red Sea covered them, when they pursued

<sup>1</sup> Deut. v, 1-22.

<sup>2</sup> Deut. iv, 32-36.

you, and how the Lord destroyed them until this present day; and what he hath done to you in the wilderness, till you came to this place; and to Dathan and Abiron the sons of Eliab, who was the son of Reuben, whom the earth opening her mouth swallowed up with their households, and tents, and all their substance which they had in the midst of Israel.

*“Your eyes have seen all the great works of the Lord that he hath done.”*<sup>1</sup>

Was it true that the people to whom Moses spoke had witnessed all these things? Could he appeal to them so, if they had not? Oh! how the false Arab shrinks and dwindles beside this true Prophet of God. How grand and awful was his attitude before the Hebrew people, while pointing to the arrested laws of nature in testimony to his divine mission, he challenged their faith and obedience. If his personal corresponded in the least to his moral presence, then may we say indeed, with an accomplished poetess:

“His eyes were dreadful, for you saw  
That they saw God—his lip and jaw  
Grand-made and strong, as Sinai’s law—  
And his brow’s height was sovereign.”

<sup>1</sup> Deut. xi, 1-7.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE PHILOSOPHY OF MIRACLES.

" All nature is but art unknown to thee,  
All chance direction which thou canst not see,  
All discord harmony not understood."

POPE.

THE Naturalist sometimes objects to the doctrine of miracles, that it is an interruption to the harmony of nature. We see all things in nature constructed upon a plan, and conducted according to harmonious laws. The more deeply we investigate, the more this universal harmony, this unity in all the plans of Providence appears. But now—to introduce upon this fair field of nature a miracle, is to introduce a false chord into the harmony of the divine plan ; for, a miracle—what is it but an event contrary to the laws of nature, or one in which those laws are suspended or set aside ?

Why should God violate a law of his own making ? Has his plan proved to be defective ? Has anything occurred which he could not foresee, and which will not range itself under the laws which he has framed ? If he did foresee it, could he not, in his infinite wisdom, frame a system in which all should harmonize ! For my part, (he concludes) it is out of reverential confidence in the wisdom of the divine Author of nature that I reject the idea of miracles ; and, therefore, I hold in regard to all reputed miracles, that either there has been invalid testimony, some fiction, exaggeration, or deception of the

senses, or else that they are only miracles to our ignorance, and, if nature were better known, would range themselves under her laws.

The Christian must deal gently and cautiously with an argument like this, for not only is it very often advanced in perfect good faith, but there is more than one great truth contained in it, which he will prejudice his own cause by denying or appearing to deny.

It is true that this world has been constructed upon a plan, and a perfect one. The laws of nature are ample and sufficient for all that nature comprehends. The divine plan is without defect, and needs no revision, no amendment. Let us not join issue with the theist here: he stands upon a truth, and we shall enlist against us all that is noble and truthful in his nature, if we contradict or evade his position. The beauty and harmony of the visible world have charmed the mind and the senses of the student of nature. Perhaps he is no materialist. He sees reflected in creation the beauty and wisdom of the Creator, and, if so, there is something religious and sacred in his veneration of it.

But let us remind him of another truth, which his own favorite studies will have taught him. We cannot read nature with full intelligence while we only read by piecemeal. One chapter of that book must be interpreted by another, since all its chapters are parts of the same whole, which whole includes the entire creation, and that creation includes both the material and the spiritual world. The physician is too narrow-minded who judges his patient only by the laws of anatomy and chemistry, and forgets that the spiritual world is interlocked with the material, in the economy of life and health. The movements of the mind and the affections of the heart affect the body, and the medical man who forgets this will find frequent

interferences with the laws of nature, according to his narrow understanding of nature. One, however, of larger views will discover in this only a larger field of law and order. Here is one point where two worlds touch and interlock—the world of matter and the world of spirit. Are there no other points of contact?

If we admit the existence of spirits, pure spirits, and of a higher order for the most part than our own, have we any ground to say that, because they are not linked to matter as our spirits are, therefore they have no means of communication with matter? Because we know of one established point of contact in human life (which in truth we only know as a fact, being wholly ignorant of its philosophy), shall we therefore argue that there cannot be others, equally founded in nature and governed by law, although the actual contact be neither permanent nor frequent? Is this so impossible that no testimony should satisfy us, nor even our own eyesight, of any phenomenon which could not be accounted for by less wonderful means? One might as reasonably have said a hundred years ago that mountains cannot be formed by slow degrees, because he had never seen one grow, and could find no law in nature for it. Wise men, even at that time, when they saw fossils dug out from their strata in the heart of a hill, admitted that the ground above had been superadded, although they could see no law for it.

If, on the contrary, we admit the probability, or even the possibility, of the occasional intervention in our physical world of bodiless spirits, possessed perchance of greater power over matter than we, then we are no longer mere naturalists, in the narrow sense of the word. Our range of vision has become extended, and our philosophy takes in both the visible and invisible world, and these

not as altogether alienated departments, but as distinct parts of one harmonious creation.

"But," objected Walter, "the phenomena resulting from such intercommunication are not miracles, since they are effected by means of established forces in nature; and, for the same reason, I cannot see why they should be called supernatural."

"True, Walter; you have anticipated what you will find in that paper further on. These are not miracles in the highest and strictest sense of the word. They are not supernatural. They are not above nature, but only above our range. They are events which happen within our horizon, the causes lying outside. They are the visible effects of invisible agencies."

"But allow me to ask, Uncle Bird, if the agencies which produce these phenomena are invisible, and beyond our reach, may not the conditions under which they act belong to our visible world?"

"Perhaps so, partly at least, as the conditions necessary to the production of iron ware lie partly in the workshop, and partly in the workmen. These preternatural events, however, are so rare that they cannot be studied to much advantage. I doubt we shall always be ignorant of the laws which govern them. Now read on again, my boy!"

But let us now advance a little farther, until we enter into the field of true miracles. There is still another world which we have not yet taken into view—the moral world. In God's grand plan it lies distinct but not isolated. In this moral world an element exists of a peculiar kind. It has a right and a wrong. The justice and holiness of God are reflected in it, and constitute a law for the intelligent creature. That law is written in the conscience, and the will is made subject to it. In this moral

world that will is necessarily free ; otherwise it could not come under the law, for fatality leaves no room for duty. Duty, or moral law, free will, righteousness, and (at least as a possibility) sin with its penalty : these are constituent elements of the moral world. Now, starting from these premises, let us look for a moment at the theory of the Christian faith. I do not wish to argue it here. It can scarcely be necessary even to state it in a Christian land like this, for even those who do not believe it are acquainted with it, sufficiently at least for my purpose. They know that it supposes the necessity of a special revelation, and looks back to a divine scheme of redemption and regeneration. Now, this scheme must have formed a part of the great original plan of the creation, since the necessity for it must have been foreseen by the all-wise Creator.

"It would seem so," interrupted Walter, "but does not that make sin a part of the divine plan?"

"Why, no," I replied, "unless in the same way that erecting a college of surgeons involves a plan to break people's legs. But I cannot allow myself just now to be led into abstract questions. The existence of sin is not a speciality of the Christian religion. All religions and all philosophies have that to account for. Read on!"

Now, to carry out this purpose of regeneration, or restoration of fallen man, to make this special revelation, no forces, no means existing in nature could suffice, for nothing existing in nature could give satisfactory testimony to it. No witness could provide his own credentials. No voice familiar to men could reveal that plan, and furnish proof of its divine origin. God might undoubtedly make a revelation to some one of our race, and impress the conviction of its truth upon his mind, but to other minds that revelation would carry no authority. Were an angel even



to come from the other world with full knowledge of the plan, he could not prove his mission. Were he to bring with him those preternatural powers (so called) which belong to his superior nature, he might gather to his gospel many disciples, but after all, his proof would be defective. Great probabilities, I grant, would be in his favor, but his credentials would be incomplete. Whoever announces a new revelation must bring some visible proof in which the finger of *God* is manifestly and directly concerned, that finger being incapable of attesting to a lie. In other words, he must produce a *miracle*; not merely a wonder some degrees above the innate forces of this lower world, but something which to the angels themselves would be a wonder, something which could only proceed from that hand which first created, and can still create, and has more of force remaining in it than was ever lodged in the constitutions of earth or heaven—in other words, a force equal to the creative power.

“What kind of a miracle would be equal to that?” inquired Becky.

“Why, to raise the dead, for instance, or to give sight to a man whose eyes were out.”

“I don’t know, Brother Jonathan, I don’t know. That’s rather strong. For my part, I should believe that angel you spoke of, if he came preaching the things I find in my Bible, without asking such miracles as that.”

“What miracle would satisfy you, sister?”

“Why, if I had the toothache pretty bad, or if he could make me see to sew without spectacles. I don’t know, indeed, whether I’d trouble him at all. What’s the sense of being so difficult?”

“And I am disposed to go part-way with Aunt Becky,” chimed in Walter. “If the doctrine were good and consistent—if even high and holy, and contradictory to no

other known truth, and the proofs were certain and superhuman, I suspect the angel would gain my faith without appealing to a class of miracles so purely divine."

"Perhaps you are right, my boy, perhaps you are right; but wonders which are merely preternatural are *not* so certain; they are too easily created by the imagination, and too easily imitated by jugglers. Besides, others are more exacting; and it only shows the condescending goodness of God, that he sometimes clothes his messengers with powers so awful and unmistakable, that the most skeptical logician can find no flaw in their credentials. Take up your manuscript again, now, before the thread is lost."

—Is there anything disorderly in this supposition? Does such a miracle argue weakness or change in the Creator? Does it not harmonize rather with the whole plan of creation, if we suppose in that plan a moral world? In fact, is there in it anything more than every naturalist already believes, who admits of evidence gathered from the rocks to show that God has often interposed, by new creations of species, to repair the waste of earlier life? Is there anything in either case to destroy our confidence in the harmony of nature, whether God interposes in the visible world to create new life, or to bring back to life; to fill up the place of a lost type, or to commend a messenger to lost man? On the contrary, here is nothing but new proof of order and harmony. If it is in accordance with the wisdom of Him who made all things, to exert new creative force in order to renew the waste life of this material world, how much more so, in order to communicate with fallen man, to renew in him his original justice, and restore to him that magnificent destiny to which he was created? If in the former case we need suppose no departure from his eternal plan, why should we in the lat-

ter? To create a new species is as purely a miracle as to raise the dead. Why are some naturalists so ready to admit the one, and so loth to admit the other? <sup>1</sup>

"Do you regard a miracle as something contrary to the laws of nature?" asked Walter.

"No; I have just argued that they are not. They are events happening within the domain of nature, out of the usual course of nature, and produced by a power above nature. According to my conception, they proceed from a plan, and take place according to law. They present a higher view, however, of the divine plan, than any elucidated in Humboldt's *Cosmos*; the laws by which they are governed are not altogether unknown to Christian theology, although much lies concealed in the secret counsels of God. This is my philosophy of miracles."

"I like it well enough," said Walter, "in theory. There is nothing wanting to make me believe in a miracle, except to prove the fact."

"If you were a naturalist," I replied, "the fact well proved ought to be sufficient without a theory. Naturalists profess to build their theories upon facts, not facts upon theories."

"Well, then, let us leave them for the present. What say you, Uncle Bird, to the Metaphysicians? If I mistake not, Christian philosophers are accustomed to define a miracle as something *contrary* to the laws of nature."

"I have only one suggestion to make to the Metaphysicians," said I. "We use, properly enough, the expressions: laws of nature, secondary causes, divine interposition, &c., because it is necessary sometimes to the free

<sup>1</sup> This argument of course is *ad hominem*. For our own part, we are still reluctant to adopt the theory of new creations of species, albeit without pretending to have any philosophical principles to urge against it *a priori*.

action of speech, not to be over nice. But it must not be forgotten that God is the real actor in all that transpires in the universe of a positive character. In Him 'all things live and move and have being.' All being, or, to speak more accurately, all existence, proceeds from Him, and never separates from Him. When we say that the universe moves according to fixed laws of nature, we mean, or ought to mean, nothing more than that God in the universe always acts in conformity with his own nature, which, although perfectly free, is never eccentric. Freedom of the will is not synonymous with *power of choice*, nor necessarily allied to it. God has no choice between good and evil, or (to use terms essentially equivalent) between order and disorder. He is bound by the infinite order and harmony of His own perfect nature, and thus all that is (positively is) in this world is orderly and harmonious, because all that is is the act of God. Not even chaos was a disorder, but only an undeveloped order; no laws of nature were in conflict then. The bells of creation ring, and always rang, in chime to the Ear that hears them all. Nature's grand chorus is lost to our imperfect hearing; we catch only her melodies and partial harmonies.

'And wheresoever in His grand creation

Sweet music breathes—in wave, or bird, or soul—

'Tis but the faint and far reverberation

Of that great tune to which the planets roll.'

Sin is the only discord, the only real disorder, because it is the negation of what is, and therefore of what is good, and therefore of what is God, and therefore of what is order, since order is the essential law of the Divine Being. For this simple reason, all that takes place in nature of a positive character moves upon a plan of perfect, albeit most complicated and wide extending, order. What we call natural law is only God acting outside himself, or *ad*

*extra*, but, in conformity with the law of his own being, always acting in unfailing harmony. It is a heathenish idea of miracles to suppose a divine action in conflict with nature, and the idea is in perfect keeping with the immoral character of their deities. They did not stand in heathen mythology as primal causes, but disturbing agents in nature; and therefore the Psalmist well says: "For all the gods of the Gentiles are devils, but the Lord made the heavens."

## CHAPTER XVI.

### TRUTHFULNESS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

#### FACTS OF A PRIVATE NATURE, AND THOSE OF ANTERIOR HISTORY.

“So he the years of his old age employed,  
A faithful chronicler, in handing down  
Names which he loved, and things well worthy to be known.”  
*A Tale of Paraguay.*

FACTS of a private nature, that is, such as happened under the eye of the narrator alone, or of a very limited number of persons, do not of course carry with them that same irresistible force as when attested by a multitude. In the latter case, our motives for believing do not rest merely upon the word of the narrator, nor even the truthful character of the crowd of witnesses, but far more upon the impossibility of their being all deceived, or combining to deceive us. In the former case, however, we are prompted to inquire into the reputation of the author for intelligence and truthfulness.

It would scarcely seem necessary to take so much trouble in the matter we have now in hand. When the great paramount facts of Scripture history are proved—those which in their very nature are the most wonderful and difficult of belief, as well as the most significant and characteristic—it would argue a strange narrowness of intellect and a great stubbornness of incredulity to dicker about smaller matters. One does not examine with a

microscope to see whether a house is solidly built. When a load of hay goes through a gate, we need not experiment with a wheelbarrow. The prophet who talked with God on the burning top of Sinai, surrounded by the terrified host of Israelites below, may well be believed when he tells us of his solitary vision of the burning bush. It will not however be amiss to glance at some special motives of credibility which claim faith for these minor facts of Bible history.

Our reasons for believing them are much the same as the contemporaries of the sacred writers had, with this difference, that their reasons were more immediate ; ours coming to us through the medium of tradition, or transmission from them. We believe because they did. If they were safe in believing, so are we. We have the same security.

In the first place—what title have these writers to our confidence in their words? What were their personal characters? One startles at the expression. One is afraid to use the ordinary style of critics, when speaking of these honored names, honored not only because of that sacred mantle of prophecy which enfolds them, but because of the purity and sanctity of their lives—the beauty and splendor of their virtues. These are the “men of renown” of whom the Ecclesiast recites the praises :

*“Showing forth in the Prophets the dignity of Prophets ;—rich men in virtues studying beautifulness. All these have gained glory in their generations, and were praised in their days.”*<sup>1</sup>

These were not mere blameless men, but the very champions of innocence and virtue. These were not merely truthful men, but “crusaders for the truth.” Of them all may be said what God said of Levi, by the mouth of his Prophet Malachy :

<sup>1</sup> Eccl. xliv, 3 et seq.

*"The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips; he walked with me in peace and equity, and turned many away from iniquity."*<sup>1</sup>

It would be both wearisome and useless to run over the lives of these sacred writers in order to canvass their several characters. They are too well known. The most characteristic actions of their lives are mingled up with the memorable events of history, and spread out upon the most public records the world knows of. Enough to say—they possessed the unbounded confidence of all hearts in their own day, and time has found no cause to reverse the judgment of their contemporaries. If any part of the credit we give to history depends upon the just and upright character of the historian, it is faint praise to say that the Hebrew sacred writers are peers among the most preëminent.

We possess a far higher guarantee for the truthfulness of the Scripture history, in the miraculous powers possessed by its authors. That they had these powers has been proved, albeit incidentally, in a former chapter. These were the signs and seals of their office—divine vouchers, not only for their authority and competency to teach, but also of their fidelity to the truth both in speaking and in writing. One would have strange ideas of the competency of God to carry out his own designs, who could suppose it possible that he should select liars to be the mediums of divine revelation, and even furnish them with miraculous powers to recommend themselves to confidence. An ordinary man of business would know better how to select his agents.

We possess, therefore, all the motives of confidence in the veracity and capacity of the sacred writers which the highest human authority can afford us, while still over

<sup>1</sup> Mal. ii, 6.



and above we have the authority of an unmistakable voice from the God of truth and wisdom. To reject the former, is to undermine the foundations of all history ; to reject the latter intelligently and with a clear understanding of terms, is simply impossible.

But we must not dwell any longer on this part of our argument. We cannot without repetitions which would be both useless and wearisome. One word more, and then onward !

“ ’Tis time that kid and I were home  
An hour and a half ago.”

If the facts contained in the sacred Scriptures of a public character are true,—if those of a more private occurrence are true—we have none remaining to hang a doubt on, unless it be necessary to distinguish a third class of facts to which neither the author nor his contemporaries could be eye witnesses, but related by him as occurring at some period anterior to his own times. Now, facts of this class are by no means prominent ones in point of importance, nor are they predominant in point of number. Where shall we look for them ? Not surely in such of the sacred books as belong to the class of chronicles or memoirs : for example, the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Josue, which, independently of the constant tradition to that effect, bear internal evidence of having been written by Moses and Josue themselves.<sup>1</sup> They are written in the form of journals, or memoranda of public transactions, in which the authors themselves bear a most prominent part, and resemble precisely in this respect the Commentaries of Cæsar.

Very nearly the same may be said of the far greater part of the other historical books. The four books of the

<sup>1</sup> See Deut. xxxi, 24 ; Josue xxiv, 26.

Kings are nothing else than the annals of the nation during the times of the monarchy, originally composed by contemporary authors, but reduced to form and order by some other hand in later times. Thus, the events of the life and reign of David, written by the Prophets Samuel, Nathan, and Gad, were made to compose the two first books of the Kings, as we gather from the Paralipomenon: "Now the acts of King David, first and last, are written in the book of Samuel the Seer, and in the book of Nathan the Prophet, and in the book of Gad the Seer."<sup>1</sup> The third and fourth books were made up from the memoirs of succeeding Prophets; the events of the reign of Solomon from the annals of Nathan, Ahias and Addo;<sup>2</sup> the reign of King Abias from the annals of Addo; the reign of Josaphat from the annals of Jehu;<sup>3</sup> the reigns of Ozias and of Ezechias by Isaias.<sup>4</sup> The two books of Paralipomenon, or, as St. Jerome calls them, the Chronicles, cover the same period with the Kings, and are merely an abridged and supplementary history arranged in chronological order from earlier annals. The author frequently cites his authority under the name of "annals" or "days of Juda and Israel."<sup>5</sup> The book of Daniel, which lets us into the period of the captivity in Babylon, was written by that Prophet, and is an account of his own life and times: The books of Esdras and Nehemias (2d Esdras) were written by those Prophets, and contain simply an account of what took place under their own administrations. The author of the first Machabees is not known, but in concluding he cites the annals of the pontificate of John Hircanus, with whose administration the book closes. The 2d Machabees was written in Greek, and probably later, but covers the same ground with the first.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Par. xxix, 29.<sup>2</sup> 2 Par. ix, 29.<sup>3</sup> 2 Par. xx, 34.<sup>4</sup> 2 Par. xxvi, 22; xxxii, 32.<sup>5</sup> Bergier, Roi. Paral.

We have thus an almost uninterrupted history of the Hebrew nation, reaching from the earliest days of Moses to the time of the Judges, from thence through the whole period of the monarchy to the Babylonian captivity, and from the captivity on until Hebrew history loses all its solitary grandeur, and becomes involved in the classic wars of Alexander and his generals, and the growing fortunes of the great Roman republic. And all this long range of history has been transmitted to us by means of annals, records concurrent with the events, written by the civil and religious dignitaries of the nation. The gap between the death of Josue, and the commencement of the monarchy—a period, it is supposed, of some 400 years—is occupied by the book of Judges, written, as tradition has it, by Samuel, the last of the Judges. Reasoning from the Hebrew custom of preserving their annals, it is quite probable that this is also a compilation from public records.

It appears therefore, as we have already said, that the amount of that class of facts which still remains to be disposed of, namely, facts of history anterior to the epoch of the writer, is not comparatively very great. Leaving out of question those books which are purely prophetic, or occupied with moral instruction, or like the Psalms and Canticles simply devotional, we have remaining the book of Genesis, and a few other small books of history or biography. Such are the books of Job, Ruth, Tobias, Judith, and Esther. There is, moreover, internal evidence to indicate that the three books last mentioned were written by authors contemporary to the events related.

But even if this class were far more numerous—what then? They constitute the common material of our best accredited books of history. Very few of us in these days ever see or care to see the original sources of history,

whether modern or ancient. And why? Because we are persuaded, from the nature of the case, that no fictitious history can ever be got into vogue, since it would necessarily be detected and exposed at the outset.<sup>1</sup> If it represents events as taking place in our day, they must have taken place somewhere, and in that somewhere witnesses are living to repudiate the falsehoods. If it professes to recount transactions of a former age, the falsehood fares no better. The author lives somewhere, and cannot put his story in circulation, except under the eyes of many that know him. If he has vouchers for his history, these vouchers too have a history, and must be known to many; if he has none, his book either moulds in the publisher's hands, or if any talent be displayed in the composition, it may take its place with Robinson Crusoe and Gulliver's travels among the agreeable works of fiction. It is impossible to impose any such thing upon us in our day, nor could it be done any more securely among the ancient Hebrews, a people scarcely less civilized, and quite as wide awake in such matters as any in the nineteenth century, and perhaps far more alive to national pride, and everything which concerned the genealogies and antiquities of their race.

"It appears to me," said Walter, when he had finished reading, "that you have not cleared up this question so far as relates to events which transpired long anterior to the writer's own epoch. All that is recorded in Genesis as occurring before Abraham, and especially the events of the antediluvian world, must be regarded as matter of high antiquity in the days of Moses. Now, if the book were not

<sup>1</sup> History may of course be miscolored, false motives assigned to individuals, false causes assigned as giving birth to events, &c.; but this is not false history. It is false philosophy of history. History, as we use the term, is simply the record of events.

claimed as an inspired one, and the canon of Scripture commenced only with Exodus, there would be no difficulty in my mind. I should regard the Genesis with great veneration on account of its antiquity, and, however imperfect it might seem, as a most invaluable contribution to history. Being in almost sole possession of the ground it covers, its narrative would be entitled to great respect, although belonging to the domain of secular science, and subject to every species of fair criticism. For, of course, in such case implicit confidence could not be placed in it, the author not being in a position to command always exact and certain information, but obliged, like all compilers of ancient history, to exercise his best judgment upon the materials before him. But a greater authority is claimed for this book. It is supposed to be inspired. Now, I ask, do you consider this inspiration to guarantee everything contained in it, as infallibly true? If so, any manifest error in it, which cannot be attributed to the carelessness of scribes, will overturn your whole ground of support. And if not, how far does its warranty extend?"

"In other words, Walter, you mean to ask: is the inspiration *plenary*, so that God is to be accounted as strictly the author of every thought and word, without distinction?"

"Yes; and if there are any distinctions to be made, let me have them, with the why and wherefore."

"We will talk about that next Saturday. I am glad that you have raised this question so distinctly, for it stands high among all the mooted points of modern controversy about revelation, and to my mind is the 'key of the position.' Those champions of the Bible who look for their adversaries, not in the living world, but in the libraries of their grandfathers, are not apt to find it out."

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF INSPIRATION.

"Thus the Seer,  
With vision clear,  
Sees forms appear and disappear,  
In the perpetual round of strange  
Mysterious change,  
From birth to death, from death to birth,  
From earth to heaven, from heaven to earth;  
With glimpses more sublime  
Of things unseen before."

LONGFELLOW.

"MY question is this," said Walter, on the following Saturday, "how far does this guarantee of inspiration extend? Have we divine authority for *everything* contained in the Sacred Books—what regards religious doctrine, and what does not—what is essential to the main current of the narrative, and what is incidental and unessential—what belongs to the body of the thought, and what only to the form of expression. Does no imperfection attach to the statements of the author, arising from the peculiar state of society and manners, or the infancy of science in his times. Is God sponsor for him in all things, and *ad unguem*, or only in divine things, and measurably?"

"There is a great diversity of opinion," I answered, "in regard to this question. We know that the sacred writers of the Old Testament were inspired, but neither our Lord nor his Apostles have defined the precise nature of this inspiration, or its extent, nor are the ancient

Fathers and early writers of the Church any more explicit. The subject began to be more thoroughly discussed in the sixteenth century, and theologians were found to hold widely differing opinions.

"In 1586 Lessius and Hamel, of the Society of Jesus, advanced and defended in public theses at Louvain the following propositions :

"1. To constitute sacred Scripture it is not necessary that each and every word be inspired by the Holy Ghost.

"2. It is not necessary that every truth and opinion should be inspired to the writer immediately by the Holy Ghost.

"3. Any book (such as may have been, for instance, the 2d Machabees), written without the assistance of the Holy Ghost, becomes sacred Scripture if the Holy Ghost afterward testifies that there is nothing false in it.

"The theologians of Louvain and Douay black-balled these propositions in 1587 and 1588, but their censure has by no means been ratified by the rest of the Catholic world. Protestant authors are much divided in opinion, although inclining more to the idea of immediate and verbal inspiration.

"In reasoning upon the nature and extent of inspiration, it is necessary to keep in mind a distinction made by modern theologians between *Revelation* and *Divine Assistance*. By the first, which is inspiration in the strict sense of the word, God suggests immediately to the author what he has to write. By the second, the author writing according to his own natural light and learning, is shielded from error by a guardianship of divine Providence. To all those who admit this distinction, the most interesting question to be determined relates to the second kind of inspiration. What is the extent of this guardianship? Or, in other words, from what sort of error is the sacred

writer thus guarded? Is he made secure against error of every kind? Are all his statements infallible, whether they regard religion, or history, or chronology, or geography, or the mysteries of nature? Or is it allowable to suppose that in some of these things he was no farther elevated above the opinions of the age in which he lived, than could be effected by hard study and native superiority of mind, God guarding him only where the interests of religion were concerned?"

"Now, to my mind," I continued, "the definition of Bergier seems to embrace all that the idea of inspiration demands. Walter, do you see that Dictionary of Theology above the closet door?—morocco binding—six volumes. Look for the word Inspiration, and bring the volume to me! Stand up in the chair!"

"Uncle Bird," said Walter, looking down at me from his perch, "there's something in this closet. I hear it breathe."

"It must be the cat," said Sister Becky.

"No, it's the dog. I hear him wagging his tail against the wall. By Jupiter, it's no dog," cried Walter, jumping down. "I hear a laugh. It's either the devil, or some infernal thief."

I started up, and seized my cane. Flourishing a book in his right hand, Walter kicked away the chair from before him, and with his left pulled open the door, while, lifting my cane high aloft, and holding it by the small end, I stood prepared to deal death to the enemy from the ivory handle.

"Don't strike me, Walter!" said a well-known voice. Our arms were lowered at once; and blushing, trembling, laughing, and weeping, all at the same moment, little Susy Brinn emerged from the closet. There was silence for some time.



"You are angry, Uncle Bird," said she.

"Have I a right to be, Miss Susan?"

"Oh! I suppose so, of course. I'm a dog, am I not? or a devil, or a thief, as this young gentleman was pleased to call me."

"No, brother," said Becky; "if any one is to blame, it's me. Susy wanted to hear the reading, and I put her in the closet. I'm sure if there was anything improper in it, I would not consent to it. That ought to be satisfactory."

"I am not quite clear upon that point," I replied. "It is hard to say which of the two has the most discretion. However, if Miss Susan will retire immediately, we will have no quarrel."

"Well, then, I won't go," said Susy, "until the rest do, and that's the end of it. Bless my soul! I have had the run of this study ever since I could walk and talk, and I shall not allow myself to be turned out of it every Saturday night, to please any one. If any one wants me out, he may carry me out. So there, Mr. Speaker, you have my sentiments on this question."

"I turned appealingly to Walter, but the unprincipled dog was gazing in high admiration at the young rebel. In vain I looked toward Becky: she was already an implicated traitor, and showed no sign of repentance. There was no resource, and I devised a masterly retreat.

"I suppose," I said, falling back into my chair, "there is no help for it. One cannot apply force to a young lady of sixteen."

"Almost seventeen, Squire Bird, as I have informed you already. And allow me to say," she continued, determined to follow up the victory, "that I won't have any sulks about it. Look me right in the face, old gentleman." Here, standing directly in front of me, she seized me by

the coat-collar with both hands, and holding her face close to mine, while she peered into my eyes, she called up one of those irresistible smiles of her own, around which the dimples gathered, leaping to the surface like fish in a sunshiny lake.

"Do you give me permission to stay?"

"Well, well!" (hastily).

"Full, entire permission?"

"Yes." (slowly).

"Every Saturday?"

"Yes."

"With all your heart, you dear old darling?"

"With all my heart, little tyrant, but against my entire head."

"Oh! the head is of no consequence. Where shall I sit now?"

"Sit anywhere, only be quick, and get quiet as soon as you can. No, not there"—Walter was proffering a chair near himself—"sit on this side of me, out of the way. I insist upon that condition."

"Well, so be it!" said Susy, and then added, with unsurpassable impudence, "You know you always will have your own way."

"Keep still now, and hold your tongue, if possible. Walter, where were we?"

"You were speaking, sir, of Bergier's idea of inspiration, and I was just taking down this volume from the shelf——"

"Which you intended to throw at my head, you villain!"

"Susy Brinn! Susy Brinn!"

"Well, Uncle, that's the last word I'll speak, upon my word and honor!"

"Give me that book, Walter. Here is what Bergier

says of inspiration :—‘ We must hold for certain, 1. That God has *revealed* immediately to the sacred writers, not only the prophecies they uttered, but all the truths which they could not know by the natural light of reason, or by human means. 2. That by a particular *inspiration* of grace he moved them to write, and directed them in the choice of the things which were proper to be written ; and, 3. That by a special *assistance* of the Holy Ghost he watched over them, and preserved them from any error, whether in essential facts, in matters of religious belief, or in questions of morality. These three things are necessary in order that the sacred Scriptures may establish our faith beyond danger of error, and they are sufficient for that purpose.’ In this third point, his idea appears to coincide precisely with that of Henry Holden, doctor of the Sorbonne, who maintained that the assistance of the Holy Ghost in guarding the sacred writers against error belongs solely to doctrinal matters, and to such things as proximately or necessarily affect religious doctrine. For my own part, I see no reason why he should have illuminated their minds, or directed their pens in any details where religion was in no way concerned. At all events, that he did is a thing to be proved. One cannot accept such a fact without authority and without argument, and simply upon the strength of a pious sentiment.”

“ What is the prevailing opinion, sir, upon this point ? ” asked Walter.

“ That I will not pretend to decide, but I will read you something to the purpose. Let me see ! I think I saw it in—I saw it—I think—ah ! yes—here it is ! I must translate :

“ ‘ The common opinion now among judicious interpreters and theologians is that not all the books of Scripture are in such a sense sacred and canonical, that all their

words or all their meanings are immediately dictated by the Holy Ghost; but they consider that, to constitute a sacred and canonical book, it is sufficient that the author, by a special movement or inspiration of God, has applied himself to write those things which have come to his knowledge, either from trustworthy books, or the report of competent witnesses, or by process of reason, God by his special assistance taking care the while that no error shall creep in, *especially in matter of faith and morals.*"<sup>1</sup>

"It would seem, then," said Walter, "that there are some things in the Bible which do not belong to religious faith or morals, and for the accuracy of which the divine authority is not responsible."

"Why not?" I replied; "I see nothing strange in that supposition. For instance, that Moses undertook to write the primitive history of mankind by some impulse from above, either manifest or secret, I have no doubt. The reasons for it are easily conceivable. In that primitive history the primitive religion is contained, and certain things which are typical of later events and after revelations. That God should keep guard over his pen wherever the true exposition of that religion is concerned, is necessary for reasons already implied, and for others easy to be imagined. But that God should supersede entirely the action of the Prophet's mind, and the necessity of his own care and industry, fill up all that as mere history was imperfect, and restrain him within the precise limits of what was necessary to religion, is not presumable. Moses wrote just such a book as would be acceptable in his day and nation, gathering up the traditions of the past; and the character of the historian is not sunk in that of the Prophet. It is possible that he was utterly unconscious

<sup>1</sup> Amort. Demonst. Crit. Rel. Christ. Quaest. 19. Apud Christmann. Reg. Fidei.

of acting under any divine instigation or direction in writing the Book of Genesis ; it is by no means probable that he was familiar with the ulterior designs of Providence in regard to its contents."

"You do not, then, regard the Genesis as entirely and thoroughly a sacred book?"

"I do, indeed, for it has a divine guarantee attached to the whole of it. We are guaranteed, not that every word is literally true, but that nothing in it, fairly interpreted, can mislead us *in religious belief or moral conduct.*<sup>1</sup> Does faith need more? This, it seems to me, is all that the idea of inspiration rigorously demands. To insist upon more may be satisfactory to such as would have the Bible to serve as a cabinet of historical curiosities, or of natural science, but they have no right to stake all the interests of religion upon their opinion."

"I think," said Walter, "that some friends of the Bible will require more."

"I have no doubt of it. They will hold it as a matter of divine faith, that the gold of the land of Ophir is good, and that Tobit's dog wagged his tail."

"Well, brother, didn't he wag it?" inquired Becky.

"Yes, sister, I am pretty confident that he did, if he had any. It was a very natural thing for a dog to do under the circumstances. But I don't see how it can be a fact of such consequence as to require the safeguard of inspiration."

"There are some also, Uncle Bird, who will say that your theory of inspiration opens a dangerous door, since men may take for non-essential things which are really essential."

"Of course they may. That dangerous door has al-

<sup>1</sup> Understood in this sense, we believe most heartily in the *plenary* inspiration of Scripture.

ways been open for such as interpret Scripture by the single light of their own reason, since no man's judgment is infallible. To the Catholic this door is not dangerous. The same God that inspired the Prophets to write has founded a Church to teach. Both are equally divine, Church and Bible. The same truthful hand is in both. The one is the written monument of revelation, the other its living oracle. The one is our text book, the other our teacher. It is for want of all reference to Christian tradition, and the living voice of the Church, as concurrent authorities with the Bible, that our age has witnessed the sad spectacle of an Anglican Bishop abandoning the Old Testament to the mercy of its foes.<sup>1</sup> Feeling the necessity of a sure, complete, and never-failing rule of faith, and holding the doctrine of the Reformers that the Bible is the *sole* rule, he felt bound to extend the guarantee of its inspiration to the accuracy of every statement, however incidental and however foreign to religious doctrine, and to maintain the integrity of the text throughout, even to all questions of dates and numbers. On this narrow ground Bishop Colenso could not sustain the sacred Book, and has been forced to surrender it to the very heathen whom he was sent to convert.

<sup>1</sup> Since the above was penned, we have read the new work of Prof. Mahan in answer to Bishop Colenso. The author writes gracefully and reasons well, but he only comes safely through by riding the Catholic horse. We extract the following passage :

" *Granting the utmost*, then, with regard to the difficulties of some places of the Bible, I see in this admission nothing that goes against its claim to be the sure Word of God. The admission merely proves the folly of 'private interpretation.' The Bible not being the mind of any individual, but being (2 Pet. i, 20, 21) the broad mind of the Spirit of all Truth, it requires the whole mind of the Church to interpret it with authority. It needs, to make it clear, the learning (2 Pet. iii, 16) of all ages. It requires, to make it sure, the stability of that *stand-point* which is provided in the Church."—Chap. xi, p. 89. See also chap. iv, p. 85.

“The philosophy of the Bishop’s fall, and I think the true one, is given in a late number of the ‘Times’ by an able Reviewer, himself a skeptic by the by, and repudiating all idea of an external revelation. Reach me that paper—the under one.

“‘If we seek,’ so says the writer, ‘to trace the origin of the theological dogma of a literal or verbal inspiration of the Hebrew Scriptures—the source of so prolonged and varied a controversy—we shall at last find it has its root in the system of doctrine that arose with the Reformation. Indeed it was perhaps an *inevitable* result of that great revolution in religious thought.

“‘*Some* ultimate appeal in matters of faith is an absolute necessity. While the unity of Catholicism lasted, the church was the final oracle; and during this era there was little or no division of opinion as to biblical inspiration or interpretation—indeed, little or no question on the matter at all. But the Reformers set aside this appeal, disallowed this oracle, and substituted *the authority of the Scriptures* for the authority of the church. Hence a double action, or rather action followed by reaction.

“‘If the Scriptures were to possess any authority at all, it must be by virtue of the inspiration of the contents of those Scriptures. The Reformers considered this principle as the bulwark of the new church; and this inspiration, too, must be full, perfect, entire. Indeed, take away this faith, and you deliver Protestantism, bound hand and foot, into the power of the first logician who may wish to establish in its place either Catholicism, or Pantheism. This belief was not long in solidifying into a dogma, which Hollaz formulated in the averment that “every sentence, every word, and *even the punctuation of the Bible*, was the work of the Holy Spirit, and that no one, without being guilty of blasphemy, can doubt that the

style in which the Scriptures are written is worthy of the Divine Majesty, and therefore that it is an insult to Divine Majesty to seek in it for solecisms or barbarisms." Bishop Colenso does not seem to have known, when quoting with a protest the *dictum* of a modern would-be exponent of the creed of orthodox believers, to the effect that the Bible, "every book of it, every chapter of it, every verse of it, every word of it, every syllable of it (where shall we stop?) every *letter* of it, is the direct utterance of the Most High"—The Bishop, we say, does not seem to have remembered that this confession of faith is but an imitation of the energetic formula of the old theologian three hundred years ago.

" 'This was, one readily sees, the *reductio ad absurdum* of the principle. One also sees, however, that it was nothing more than the logical conclusion of the premiss.' "

"The reaction spoken of by the writer of this article, one in which he himself participates, as well as Bishop Colenso, is to toss to the winds that Bible so extravagantly worshipped before,<sup>2</sup> and adopt the 'inner light,' or individual reason, as the sole rule of religious belief; and he quotes with approbation the words of Bunsen: 'How long shall we bear this fiction of an external revelation!' If the philosophy of the Bishop's fall is correctly given here, it is briefly this: He felt bound as a good Protestant to hold to the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, which constituted his only rule of faith. This ground he afterward found to be untenable, with the single choice

<sup>1</sup> The New York Times, Saturday, Jan. 17, 1863.

<sup>2</sup> "Brought up in a school of 'private interpretation,' with no faith in the church, he is a victim of that popular *bibliolatry* which consists in a worship of the letter of the Scriptures, without any corresponding reverence for the 'authority' which (Art. XX) is the divinely appointed 'Witness and Keeper of Holy Writ.'"—*Answer to Bishop Colenso*, by M. Mahan, D.D., chap. iv, p. 36.



before him of Catholicism or Pantheism. He chose the latter."

"He takes refuge in the doctrine of the *inner light*," said Walter, "but how is this Pantheism?"

"If he adopts it as a rule of religious faith," I answered, "which is to save him from skepticism and doubt, he must make it an infallible one; that is, a divine one, since only God is in himself infallible. But this divine oracle in man cannot derive from supernatural revelation, or inspiration, for the Bishop has rejected that. It must, therefore, be a divinity residing in man by nature, which is Pantheism. The Bishop has eaten of that forbidden fruit which Omniscience had reserved for himself in the centre of Paradise, believing the words of the subtle serpent: '*Ye shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil.*' The choice was before him. He chose Pantheism."

"It was a fearful choice," said Walter, "for one that ever believed."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### CORROBORATIVE PROOFS FROM CONCURRENT TRADITIONS.

"Not realmless sit the ancient gods  
Upon their misty thrones—  
They were the things in which the ancient mind  
Its darkling sense of Deity enshrined."

WALLACE.

WE may add to this reflection of the poet that in the Heathen mythology was also enshrined a darkling recollection of primitive history and of primitive revelation. The remains we possess of ancient Heathen literature afford us thus a further argument in favor of the truthfulness of the Old Testament. The great leading facts of the early Bible history—in particular, those contained in the Book of Genesis, relating to the earliest history of man, before the race had become widely scattered, and great nations had been formed; before the Hebrew race itself had sprung up with its exclusive institutions and its peculiarities of worship and of manners—these great leading events of general and equal interest to all nations are also commemorated by all nations in their traditions. This, under any supposition, is a strong proof in favor of the Books of Moses. For either these nations have gathered stray morsels from the writings of that Prophet, which argues directly in favor of their high antiquity, and early acknowledged authority; or else the knowledge of these events has floated down to them from an earlier source, by independent streams of tradition. In this latter case, they

corroborate still more forcibly the testimony of Moses, and demonstrate the truthfulness of his character, and the accuracy of his knowledge in matters of primitive history. We shall not pretend to exhaust this subject. It has been treated on a far more extensive scale by others.<sup>1</sup> Suffice it for our purpose to select a few examples.

## THE CREATION.

“In the beginning,” so runs the account of Moses, “God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved over the face of the waters.”

Now see how remarkably this agrees with the Heathen traditions on the same subject.

The Greek philosopher Anaxagoras, who was born about 500 years before Christ, began a book of his in this way, as Plutarch and Eusebius both testify.<sup>2</sup> “At first, all things were together: afterward a supervenient intelligence distributed them into order.”

Hesiod (B. C. 800–900) in his *Theogony* clothes the acts of creative intelligence in the more poetical garb of Heathen mythology; but we have there too the primeval chaos, out of which the earth is formed, and the day born out of the bosom of the earlier darkness.

“First chaos was; next ample-bosomed earth—  
From chaos Erebus, and ebon Night.  
From Night the day sprang forth and shining air,  
Whom to the love of Erebus she gave.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Namely, by De Bonald, De Laménais, Auguste Nicholas, and others of the “traditional school,” whose peculiar views have led them deeply into this subject. See also Smith’s *Patriarchal Age*.

<sup>2</sup> Plut. *De Plac. Philos.* lib. i, c. 3. Euseb. *Præparat. Evang.* lib. ix, ch. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Elton’s Trans.

Ovid's description of the genesis of the universe out of chaos has so many features in common with the Mosaic account of creation, that it has often been supposed to be derived from it.<sup>1</sup> In any case it is an instance in our favor ; for an absolute Heathen with heathen surroundings would scarcely borrow anything from Hebrew theology, unless it coincided with the traditions in which he had himself been nursed.

If, leaving the philosophers and poets, we come to the less inventive and more didactic works of heathen literature, we find their traditions still admirably coinciding with sacred history. Witness the following Hindoo account of creation, from the first chapter of the Laws of Menu.<sup>2</sup>

"This (the world) was in darkness, unknown, without a mark, undiscernible, and as if all asleep. Then the self-existing Majesty, himself hidden from sense but making manifest this (world) with the elements, appeared out of the darkness. He who is beyond the reach of sense, subtle, intangible, self-existent. He who has all beings in His mind, even He himself came forth. He meditating in his mind created of his own substance various beings; created first the waters, and in them a productive seed.—The waters, therefore, are called Nara (spirit of God), and since they were his first moving, he thence is called Narayana (moving on the waters)."

Is it not wonderful? Compare this, and especially the concluding words, with the opening verses of Genesis. How shall we better account for the substantial, and to some extent even verbal coincidence of these two versions

<sup>1</sup> New Amer. Cyclopædia : Chaos.

<sup>2</sup> A friend, who is an excellent Oriental scholar, dictated this translation to us with others, from the original Sanscrit. If not elegant, it is literal.

of the creation, than by that doctrine, so well known to the Hindoos themselves, of a primitive revelation? This belief, says William Humboldt, we find deeply rooted in the most ancient Indian doctrine of Krischna: "Truth was originally implanted in mankind, but having been suffered gradually to slumber, it was finally forgotten, knowledge returning to us since that period as a recollection."<sup>1</sup>

It would be wearisome to quote all the ancient authorities, Greek, Latin, Phenician, Chaldean, and Egyptian, which give the tradition of a primal chaos, and of the original waters from which all things were produced. It is equally remarkable that the early inhabitants of Northern Europe possessed traditions which conform very closely to the account of creation in Genesis. According to the Edda, or the Iceland theology common to all the peoples of the North, an eternal Being governs all things. He created heaven and earth by animating with a *warm breath* that matter which in the beginning of ages was only a *vast abyss* without form, without plants, or germs, where all the elements were confounded together. In this description of chaos, the Edda makes mention of the separation of the land from the waters, and of the distinction of the days, times, and years.<sup>2</sup>

But let us pass on to the last and crowning work of creation ;

#### OUR FIRST PARENTS.

The origin of the human family from a single pair is a credence so common to the heathen world, that it would be tedious to quote. Either, therefore, we must suppose this general persuasion derived from an implanted instinct

<sup>1</sup> Cited by his brother. *Cosmos*, ii, 116.

<sup>2</sup> *Dict. de Bergier*. Appendix to vol. iii. Note 15.

of brotherhood in the human breast, or else from the scattered threads of a primitive tradition. Instinct alone, however, will not suffice to cover the ground. We find the common doctrine extending its resemblances to several particular circumstances, and even to the very names. Thus in the Scandinavian Edda, the name of the first man is given as Aske, and that of the woman Emla.<sup>1</sup> According to Persian tradition their names are Meschia and Meschiane. The Hebrew of Eve is Ischa, the Chaldean, Itta, which last bears an obvious resemblance to that vixen of Greek mythology, Ate, commemorated by Homer:

“Jove’s eldest daughter who hath lost us all,  
Pernicious Ate.”<sup>2</sup>

From one of the Upanishads, or Hindoo commentaries on the Veda, which, according to Sir William Jones, must have been written at least 880 years before Christ, and, as others insist, much earlier, we gather the following account of the formation of the first woman out of the substance of the man.

“Looking around, he saw nothing but himself. He felt dread, and therefore man dreads when alone. He felt not delight, and therefore man delights not when alone. He wished for another, and instantly he became such as is man and woman in mutual embrace. He caused this his own self to fall in twain, and thus became a husband and a wife. Therefore this was, as it were, *an imperfect moiety of himself, for so Yajnywalcyā* (the first man) *called it*. This blank therefore is completed by woman. He approached her; and thence were human beings produced.”<sup>3</sup>

Compare the above with the account of Eve’s formation in the book of Genesis. “And the Lord God said:

<sup>1</sup> Edda, Fables i—iv.

<sup>2</sup> The Iliad, ch. xix.

<sup>3</sup> Vide supra, p. 196, note 2.

It is not good for man to be alone ; let us make him a help like unto himself. Then the Lord God cast a deep sleep upon Adam ; and when he was fast asleep, he took one of his ribs, and filled up flesh for it. And the Lord God built the rib which he took from Adam into a woman, and brought her to Adam. *And Adam said : This now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh : she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man."*

In the two accounts, besides the common origin of the race from a single pair, we have the following coincidences : the loneliness of man at his first creation—the formation of the woman from the substance of the man—and the name of the woman derived from this circumstance, and given to her by her husband.

#### PRIMITIVE INNOCENCE.

Who has not read of the golden age ? And who that has read loves not to read again and again ? In every cosmogony the history of man opens, as in the Bible, with an infant world of innocence and joy. The classical student will easily pardon us for reproducing here those gems from the Greek and Roman poets, which not all the associations of wearisome bench and cruel birch can ever rob of their attractions. These attractions, be it understood, do not lie so much in the coloring of the poet's art as in the inherent charm of the tradition itself. They are therefore still beautiful in translation. Here is first old Hesiod's version of it :

"They lived of old,  
When Saturn lived in heaven ; an age of gold.  
Like gods they lived, with calm untroubled mind.  
Free from the toil and anguish of our kind ;  
Nor e'er decrepid age misshaped their frame."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Works and Days." Elton's Transl.

And here is Ovid's :

"The golden age was first ; when man yet new,  
No rule but uncorrupted reason knew,  
And with a native bent did good pursue.  
Unforced by punishment, unawed by fear,  
His words were simple, and his soul sincere.  
Needless was written law when none oppressed,  
The law of man was written in his breast.  
No suppliant crowds before the judge appeared,  
No court erected yet, nor cause was heard,  
But all was safe, for conscience was their guard."<sup>1</sup>

And here is Virgil's :

"Ere Jove bore rule, no labor tamed the ground,  
None dared to raise the fence, or mark the bound ;  
Nature for all her fruits profusely bore,  
And the free earth unasked but proffered more."<sup>2</sup>

We have in these extracts the whole story of the terrestrial Paradise. Hesiod and Virgil describe the external Eden in which our progenitors lived, and Ovid the inward Eden of their innocent hearts.

John Chinaman's small eyes have often sparkled over the same cheerful tradition. The philosopher Tchouangsé taught, conformably to the sacred books of the Chinese, that—

"In the state of the first heaven, man was inwardly united to the sovereign reason, and outwardly participated in all the works of justice. The heart rejoiced in truth, and had in it no mixture of falsehood. Then the four seasons followed an established order without any confusion. Nothing was hurtful to man, and man did no injury to anything ; universal harmony reigned throughout all nature."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Metamorph. lib. i.* Dryden's Transl.

<sup>2</sup> *Georgics, lib. i.* Sotheby's Transl.

<sup>3</sup> Ramsay's *Discourse on Mythology*, cited by Auguste Nicolas. *Etudes Philos.* p. 279.



The epoch at which this western continent of ours was first peopled, must have been a very remote one ; but yet we find the same joyful reminiscences of the golden age existing among our copper-colored brethren of Mexico. European civilization certainly cannot be responsible for them, nor is it probable that they were drawn from the Hebrew records, but from that still earlier fountain of primitive knowledge which fed the Hebrew channel of tradition. We owe the following to Humboldt :

“The reign of Quetzalcoatl was the golden age of the tribes of Anahuac. Then all the animals, and men themselves, lived in peace ; the earth produced her richest harvests without cultivation. . . . But this reign and the universal happiness that prevailed were not of long duration, &c.”<sup>1</sup>

Can any comment be necessary ? Our reader is familiar with the golden age described in Genesis.

#### THE FALL.

The ancient heathen authors teach, in accordance with Moses, that every calamity was first brought upon mankind by a woman. This woman, according to Homer, was Ate, the first-born daughter of Jupiter. Jupiter having been deceived by Juno, laid the whole blame on Ate, and having seized her by the hair, flung her to earth, declaring with an oath that she should never return to Olympus.<sup>2</sup> It is true, in her fall, and the general representation given of her, she resembles more a she-devil than a woman. Since, however, Satan and Eve were joint agents in the same bad business of seducing our unfortunate Forefather,

<sup>1</sup> Vues des Cordillieres, tom. i. Cited in the notes to “Soirees de St. Petersburg,” 2me Entretiens. De Maistre.

<sup>2</sup> Anthon's Class. Dict.

it is not unnatural that the characteristics of the two should become confounded together in heathen mythology.

A closer resemblance to the sad history of the fall is found in the familiar fable of Prometheus and Pandora. Prometheus, or Epimetheus, is the Adam of heathen mythology. He is, according to Hesiod, the man "who caused from the beginning all the evils of industrious mortals; for he it was that first received for spouse a virgin formed by Jupiter." This virgin, Pandora, was constituted the guardian of a mysterious box or vase, which she was forbidden to open. She yielded however to her curiosity, and the consequences are thus described by the poet :

"Whilom on earth the sons of men abode,  
From ills apart, and labor's irksome load,  
And sore diseases bringing age to man.  
Now the sad life of mortals is a span.  
The woman's hands a mighty casket bear;  
She lifts the lid, and scatters griefs in air.  
Alone, beneath the vessel's rims detained,  
Hope still within the unbroken cell remained,  
Nor fled abroad; so willed cloud-gatherer Jove:  
(The woman's hand had dropped the lid above.)  
Issued the rest in quick succession hurled,  
And woes innumerable roamed the breathing world.  
With ills the land is rife, with ills the sea,  
Diseases haunt our frail humanity."<sup>1</sup>

How closely allied is this mythical tradition to the Mosaic history of the Fall? We have first the representative man under two characters. Prometheus and Epimetheus are, in this myth, brothers. Prometheus, or *forethought*, is man before the Fall, and personifies the prudence, intellectual vigor, and purity of man in his first state. Epimetheus, or *afterthought*, represents the weak-

<sup>1</sup> Hesiod. Works and Days. Elton's Transl.

ness and folly of man in yielding to temptation and the blandishments of a woman, which the heathen poet expresses by relating that Epimetheus received Pandora after being warned of the snare by Prometheus. In both accounts we have the divine prohibition, the violation of it through a woman's curiosity, the consequent miseries entailed upon all mankind, death, disease, and numberless woes. Perhaps it would be straining a point to carry the parallel farther; but the Christian, when he adverts to the beautiful incident that Hope alone remained in the box, can scarcely fail to be reminded how, in the history of Adam, the severe judgment of the Almighty was tempered with a promise of mercy, the hope of a Redemption. If all these woes were brought upon mankind by the hand of the Virgin Pandora, by that same soft hand of woman, guided by divine Providence, as the tradition states, hope was still secured to the race, reminding us of that familiar appeal to the Virgin Mother of the Saviour :

"Funda nos in pace,  
Mutans Evæ nomen."

The like traditions of the fall of man, and the associate doctrine of original sin, are current among other nations of the earth. As specimens, we offer the following, which have been culled from the essay of De Laménais "Sur l'Indifférence," and are for the most part given also in the "Études Philosophiques" of Auguste Nicolas.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Both these authors cite the "*Annales de la littérature et des arts*" (tom. x, p. 286), to prove an American tradition on this subject. The alleged fact is given as follows: "Last autumn (1828 or 1829) a violent storm occurred in Brownville, in the west of Pennsylvania, and uprooted an enormous oak. Under the roots was found a stone of about sixteen square feet, on which were engraved several figures, and among them two representing a man and a woman separated by a tree; the latter holding fruits in her hand. Stags, bears, and birds are engraved on the rest of the stone. This oak must have been five or six hundred years

“According to the ‘Vendidad Sadae’ of the Persians, Meschia and Meschiane, that is, the first man and the first woman, were in the beginning pure, and obedient in all things to Ormusd their Creator. Ahriman saw them, and was envious of their happiness. He presented himself to them under the form of a serpent, offered fruits to them, and persuaded them that he was the author of man, of animals, of plants, and of this beautiful universe which they inhabited. They believed him, and from that moment Ahriman became their master. Their nature was corrupted, and this corruption infected all their posterity.”

“All the ancient theologians and poets said, according to the report of Philolaus the Pythagorean, *that the soul was buried in the body as in a tomb, in punishment of some sin.*<sup>1</sup> Such was also the doctrine of the Orphics.<sup>2</sup>

old.” We are sorry to say that, upon inquiry, this fact turns out to be one of those sweet delusions with which ardent travellers sometimes allow themselves to be hooded. An intelligent clergyman who examined the stone and its history, at our request, in 1855, wrote in reply the following account of it: “The rock, still to be seen, is somewhat curious, though it appears to me that these rudely carved figures have not the most distant allusion to the creation or fall of man, or to any other Biblical fact. They seem to be very badly executed *outlines* of such animals as came under the observation of the Indians whilst loitering on the hills around the wigwams. The bear, the wolf, the fox, raccoon, and rabbit are very poorly represented. There are also human foot-prints, human heads, and the tracks of beasts and birds, and although I could not discover the design of some few grotesque figures, I am satisfied that these figures have no such allusion as that mentioned in the ‘Annales.’ Nor could I discover amongst the citizens of the place one individual who ever heard or ever thought that such figures had been noticed among these groups. Moreover, the present rock seems to be the identical one to which reference is made by the French author, as I have learned—from a man named Crawford, now about 95 years of age, who was born and has ever since lived within seventy rods of these rocks—that, about thirty years ago, a *walnut tree*, not very large, nor very old, stood upon this rock, partially covering these figures, which were then quite distinct in all their outlines, but are now partly effaced.’

<sup>1</sup> Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Plato. Crat.

“But how could the crime of one man infect the whole race? A well directed reason can discover some glimpses of light in so profound a mystery; and by taking tradition for guide, the only method which can give a solid basis and sure rule to reasoning, ancient philosophy has ascended to considerations truly beautiful on a question no less important and difficult than that of *the imputation of sin*.

“In his treatise on the ‘Delays of Divine Justice,’ Plutarch commences by observing that there are *collective beings* which may be guilty of certain crimes, as well as *individual beings*. ‘A state, for example,’ says he, ‘is one same continuous thing, a thing entire, in the same way that an animal is always the same, and undergoes no change in its identity by reason of age. The state therefore, being always one and the same, so long as the unity of association remains, the merit and the blame, the recompense and the punishment of all that is done in common, are justly distributed to it, as they are to the individual man.’

“‘But,’ adds Plutarch, ‘if the state must be considered in this point of view, so must it be with a family springing from a common source, from which it receives a certain secret force, a certain communication of substance and of qualities which extend to all the individuals in the line. Beings produced by way of generation do not resemble the productions of art. In the latter case the work is separated from the hand of the workman as soon as finished, and pertains to him no more. It remains a thing made *by him*, but is not of *him*. On the contrary, that which is engendered springs from the very substance of the generator, in such sort that it holds of him something which is most justly punished or recompensed for him, for that something is himself.’”

M. De Laménais then cites the expiatory rites employed among the ancient Romans, Egyptians, Persians, and Greeks, to purify children at their birth, and also similar customs subsisting among different nations in America, serving to show a wide-spread traditionary knowledge of the impure and guilty state of man at his birth. The expiations prescribed among the Mexican Indians, as given by Humboldt in his "Views of the Cordilleras and Monuments of America," are of some special interest to us as North Americans.

"The midwife, invoking the god Ometeuctli (the God of the celestial paradise) and the goddess Omecihuatl, who live in the abode of the blessed, cast water upon the forehead and breast of the newborn child. Then, after having recited different prayers, in which the water was considered as the symbol of the purification of the soul, the midwife had the children brought forward, who were there by invitation to name the babe. In some provinces fire was lighted at the same time, and they feigned to pass the child through the flame, as if to purify it by water and fire together."

"The sixth book of the *Æneid*," continues M. De Laménais, "is little else than a brilliant exposition of this doctrine of the corruption of our nature; and perhaps antiquity offers nothing which proves more the power of tradition over the human mind than that passage of this book where the Poet, penetrating with *Æneas* into the abode of the dead, describes in magnificent lines the mournful spectacle which first presented itself to his view. For, if there is anything in the world that awakens in us the idea of innocence, it is surely the little child, unable yet to commit sin, or even to know the nature of it. To suppose, therefore, that it should be subjected to penalties and sufferings, is a thought at which the whole soul re-

volts. Nevertheless, Virgil, the gentle Virgil, locates *at the entrance of the realms of sorrow* the infants, *snatched from the breast before having enjoyed life*, where he represents them in a state of pain, weeping and giving vent to a long continued wail.<sup>1</sup> Why those tears, those doleful voices, that rending cry? What fault are they expiating—these young children on whom their mothers never smiled?<sup>2</sup> Who can have suggested to the Poet this astonishing fiction? On what is it founded? Whence comes it, if not from the primitive belief that *man is born in sin?*<sup>3</sup>

## THE DELUGE.

Traditions of a great deluge have been preserved amongst very nearly all the nations of the earth. That of the deluge of Deucalion, which is the best known to the classical scholar, is such a perfect counterpart of the one described in Genesis, that it is impossible to conceive of their having originated from separate sources. The following is Lucian's version :

"This generation, and the present race of men, were not the first; for all those of that former generation perished. But these are of a second race, which increased from a single person named Deucalion to its present multitude. Concerning the former men they relate the following tale: Being of a violent and ferocious temper, they were guilty of every sort of lawlessness. They neither

<sup>1</sup> "*Continuò audite voces, vagitus et ingens,  
Infantumque animæ flentes in limine primo:  
Quos dulcis vitæ exsortes, et ab ubere raptos  
Abstulit atra dies, et funere mersit acerbo.*"

Æneid. lib. vi, v. 426.

<sup>2</sup> "*Cui non risère parentes.*" Eclog. iv, v. 62.

<sup>3</sup> Essai sur l'Indifference. Tom. iii, ch. 28.

regarded the obligation of oaths, nor the rights of hospitality, nor the prayers of the suppliant ; wherefore a great calamity befell them. The earth suddenly poured forth a vast body of water, heavy torrents of rain descended, the rivers overflowed their banks, and the sea rose above its ordinary level, until the whole world was inundated, and all that were in it perished. In the midst of the general destruction, Deucalion alone was left to another generation on account of his extraordinary wisdom and piety. Now, his preservation was thus effected. He caused his sons and their wives to enter into a large ark which he had provided, and afterward went in himself. But, while he was embarking, swine, and horses, and lions, and serpents, and all other animals that live upon the face of the earth, came to him in pairs. These he took in with him, and they injured him not, but on the contrary the greatest harmony subsisted between them through the influence of the Deity. Thus they all sailed together in one ark, so long as the waters prevailed." "And this," says Lucian, "is the historical account given by the Greeks concerning Deucalion." <sup>1</sup>

Nothing is wanting here but the history of the birds sent out by the Patriarch Noe from the ark ; but this we find in Plutarch, who adds to the above account that "it was maintained by mythologists that Deucalion sent a dove out of the ark, which, when it returned to him, showed that the storm was not yet abated, but when he saw it no more, he concluded that the sky was become serene again." <sup>2</sup>

Josephus, the Jewish historian, cites many authors in proof of the general prevalence of this tradition.

"The Armenians," he says, "call this place *Apobaté*—

<sup>1</sup> Lucian. De Dea Syria.

<sup>2</sup> Plut. De solert. animal. Faber's Pagan Idol. ii, p. 8.



*rion*, the place of descent, for, the ark being saved in that place, its remains are shown there by the inhabitants to this day. Now all the writers of the barbarian histories make mention of this flood and of this ark, among whom is Berosus the Chaldean. For, when describing the circumstances of the flood, he goes on thus: "It is said there is still some part of this ship in Armenia, at the mountain of the Corcyræans, and that some people carry off pieces of the bitumen, which they take away and use chiefly as amulets, for the averting of mischiefs." Hieronymus the Egyptian also, who wrote the Phœnician Antiquities, and Mnaseas, and a great many more, make mention of the same. Nay, Nicholas of Damascus, in his ninety-sixth book, hath a particular relation about them, when he speaks thus: "There is a great mountain in Armenia over Minyas, called Baris, upon which it is reported that many who fled at the time of the deluge were saved, and that one who was carried in an ark came on shore upon the top of it, and that the remains of the timber were a great while preserved. This might be the man about whom Moses, the legislator of the Jews, wrote."<sup>1</sup>

Berosus, spoken of here, was priest of the temple of Belus at Babylon, contemporary of Alexander the Great, and author of a history of Chaldea. His history is lost, but fragments of it are cited by Josephus, Eusebius, and others. The Chaldean traditions of the Flood, according to this historian, are as follows:

"After the death of Ardates (the ninth sovereign), his son Xiruthrus reigned eighteen sari. In his time happened a great deluge, the history of which is thus described: The deity Cronus appeared to him in a vision, and warned him that upon the fifteenth day of the month Dæsius there would be a flood, by which mankind would

<sup>1</sup> Antiq. of the Jews. Whiston's Tr. b. i, ch. 3.

be destroyed. He therefore enjoined him to write a history of the beginning, progress, and conclusion of all things, and bury it in the city of the sun at Sippara, and to build a vessel, and take with him into it his friends and relations, and to convey on board everything necessary to sustain life, together with the different animals, both birds and quadrupeds, and trust himself fearlessly to the deep. Having asked the deity whither he was to sail, he was answered, 'To the gods,' upon which he offered up a prayer for the good of mankind. He then obeyed the divine admonition, and built a vessel five stadia in length and two in breadth. Into this he put everything which he had prepared, and last of all conveyed into it his wife, his children, and his friends.

"After the flood had been upon the earth, and was in time abated, Xiruthrus sent out birds from the vessel, which, not finding any food nor any place whereupon they might rest their feet, returned to him again. After an interval of some days he sent them forth a second time, and they now returned with their feet tinged with mud. He made a trial a third time with these birds, but they returned to him no more, from whence he judged that the surface of the earth had appeared above the waters. He therefore made an opening in the vessel, and upon looking out, found it was stranded upon the side of some mountain; upon which he immediately quitted it with his wife, his daughter, and the pilot. Xiruthrus then paid his adoration to the earth, and having constructed an altar, offered sacrifices to the Gods, and with those who had come out of the vessel with him disappeared.

"They who remained within, finding that their companions did not return, quitted the vessel with many lamentations, and called continually on the name of Xiruthrus. Him they saw no more, but they could distin-

guish his voice in the air, and could hear him admonish them to pay due regard to religion, and likewise inform them that it was upon account of his piety he was translated to live with the Gods ; that his wife, and daughter, and the pilot had obtained the same honor. To this he added that they should return to Babylonia, and, as it was ordained, search for the writings at Sippara, which they were to make known to all mankind ; moreover, that the place where they then were was the land of Armenia. The rest, having heard these words, offered sacrifices to the Gods, and taking a circuit journeyed toward Babylonia.

“The vessel being thus stranded in Armenia, some part of it yet remains in the Coreyraean mountains of Armenia, and the people scrape off the bitumen, with which it had been outwardly coated, and make use of it by way of an alexipharmic and amulet. And when they returned to Babylon, and found the writings at Sippara, they built cities, and erected temples ; and Babylon was thus inhabited again.”<sup>1</sup>

It is needless to comment on the many coincidences between this account and that of Moses. But it is well worthy of the reader's notice that these traditions resemble that of the Hebrews more faintly or more closely, in proportion as the people that preserved them had wandered more or less from Chaldea, to which country all history points as the ancient cradle of civilization, and the centre from which all ancient emigration radiated. It was also the birthplace of the Hebrew race.

The Hindoos, whose literature is as ancient as any, the Hebrew only excepted, have preserved the tradition of the Deluge with no small degree of fidelity. The following is their version, taken from a very ancient Hindoo poem

<sup>1</sup> Cory's Fragments, pp. 26-29.

called the *Maha-bharata*. A wonderful fish, or deity under the assumed form of a fish, whose life had been preserved by the care of Manu,<sup>1</sup> is thus made by the Poet to address him :

“ In a little time, O Blessed, all this firm and seated earth,  
All that moves upon its surface, shall a deluge sweep away ;  
Near it comes, of all creation the ablution day is near,  
Therefore what I now forewarn thee may thy highest weal secure.  
All the fixed, and all the moving, all that stirs, or stirreth not,  
Lo ! of all the time approaches, the tremendous time of doom.  
Build thyself a ship, O Manu, strong, with cables well prepared,  
And thyself with the seven Sages, mightly Manu, enter in :  
All the living seeds of all things, by the Brahmins named of yore,  
Place thou first within thy vessel, well secured, divided well.”

This Manu did, and,

“ Taking first the seeds of all things, launched he forth upon the sea,”

piloted, or towed rather, over the waters by the marvellous fish.

“ With the utmost speed that vessel dragged along the ocean tide :  
Earth was seen no more, no region, nor the intermediate space  
All around a waste of water, water all, and air, and sky.  
In the whole world of creation, princely son of Bharata !  
None was seen but those seven Sages, Manu only and the fish.  
Years on years, and still unwearied drew that fish the bark along,  
Till at length it came where lifted Himavan its loftiest peak ;  
There at length it came, and smiling thus the fish the Sage addressed :  
To the peak of Himalaya bind thou now thy stately ship.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The very name of Manu resembles that of Noe, and one may have been formed from the other by receiving or dropping the prefix *M*. The same may be said of Menes, the Egyptian Noe, and supposed founder of monarchy in that country. On the other hand the names of Xiruthrus and Deucalion in their several languages, like that of Noe in the Hebrew, signify *rest*. Note xii to vol. ii of Bergier's *Dict. de Theol.*

<sup>2</sup> Milman's Translation.

Not to swell our volume too much, we pass over many other citations which might be made to show how widely the traditions of a great Deluge have been circulated among the nations of the earth, and arrive at the next memorable fact related in Genesis :

#### THE TOWER OF BABEL.

Those daring men mentioned in Genesis, the builders of the city of Babel, or Babylon, and the projectors of a tower "the top whereof might reach to heaven," are scarcely more familiar to the scholar than the Titans, giants of old, memorable in Greek and Roman mythology, who waged war against the gods and endeavored to climb up into heaven by piling Mount Ossa upon Mount Pelion, and Mount Olympus upon Ossa :

"Tum partu Terra nefando  
Cœumque Iapetumque creat, sævumque Typhœa,  
Et conjuratos cœlum rescindere fratres:  
Ter sunt conati imponere Pelio Ossam  
Scilicet, atque Ossæ frondosum involvere Olympum;  
Ter Pater exstructos disjecit fulmine montes."<sup>1</sup>

We have here, as well as in Genesis, the impious conspiracy of men against the divine power and authority, and the daring attempt to carry out their designs by raising a structure that should reach unto heaven. In one case the work is suddenly arrested by divine interposition, in the other violently thrown down. But the mythic poets tell us nothing of a confusion of languages. One would expect to find the tradition better preserved in the locality itself, and in fact Eusebius has preserved for us a fragment of the history of Assyria, written by Abydenus, in which both the building of the tower and the confusion

<sup>1</sup> Virgil. Georg. i. v. 278.

of languages are related, and other authors are cited by him to the same effect,<sup>1</sup> as well as by Josephus the Jew.

Did time and space permit, it would be easy also to confirm by heathen authorities what the Sacred Scriptures relate of the destruction of Sodom, of the Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and of many other persons and events of early history. But we do not wish to lengthen out our labor by any further accumulation of proofs of this kind. All the leading events of the book of Genesis, prior to the days of Abraham, have been touched upon already. Jewish history since then must, by the veriest infidel, be admitted as past the "fabulous era." The fact that the Hebrews call and always called themselves "the children of Israel"—that they existed so long in one nation, and yet in twelve distinct tribes, named after the twelve sons of Israel or Jacob, each tribe having its own allotted territory in the land they inhabited—that each tribe claimed descent from the Patriarch whose name it bore, one tribe even, by the sole fact of its descent from Levi, bearing away without demur the honors and privileges of the Priesthood—the fact, moreover, that one heathen race at least still existing, the Arab, claim parentage in Abraham by another line through Ishmael—all this carries us necessarily, and beyond cavil, back to the parent stock in Abraham. If there be any fabulous era in Hebrew history, it is surely before his day. We have endeavored to show that it does not exist even there. The history traced in Genesis is sometimes fragmentary and obscure, but cannot be characterized as fabulous. It is admissible, perhaps, to conjecture that there are allegories in the earlier parts,<sup>2</sup> as well as traditions dimmed by the

<sup>1</sup> Dict. Theol. de Bergier: *Babel*. See also *ibid.*, note xv on the word *Genese*.

<sup>2</sup> Cardinal Cajetan so considered the history of Eve and the Serpent.

lapse of ages before the pen of Moses had fixed them to his record. There are discordances, too, in chronology, and leaps, it may be long ones, in genealogy. Names which appear to belong to persons may be in fact the titles of dynasties. But not all that is dim in history is therefore fabulous ; and it was not without good warrant that the biographer of a Hebrew child born in the reign of Augustus, relying on the Mosaic record, could boldly trace his pedigree back to the primeval age, closing in these simple, yet sublime and awful words—"who was of Henos, who was of Seth, who was of Adam, who was of God."

## CHAPTER XIX.

### A RECONNOISSANCE IN FORCE, AND ITS RESULT.

- "1 *Cit.* What is your name?  
2 *Cit.* Whither are you going?  
3 *Cit.* Where do you dwell?  
4 *Cit.* Are you a married man, or a bachelor?  
2 *Cit.* Answer every man directly.  
1 *Cit.* Ay, and briefly.  
4 *Cit.* Ay, and wisely.  
3 *Cit.* Ay, and truly, you were best."

*Julius Cæsar.*

ON the following Saturday, after supper, I strolled about the village to get a little exercise and fresh air, for I considered my task as performed and our meetings terminated, and had so announced. I desired now to leave Walter to his own reflections; for my philosophy of human nature is, never to urge an honest and manly mind, when I see it fairly grappling with religion. This method of treatment, however, is not in accordance with the habits of womankind. On my return to the house, and entering the hall, I saw my study occupied, the usual party being all there. Walter was evidently in warm quarters, holding the two women at bay. Sister Becky had stopped knitting, and, with finger raised, was watching for the opportunity to get in a word edgewise, apparently a hopeless case, for Susy had the floor, standing directly in front of the enemy, and pouring in question upon question, without giving much time for an answer to any.



"Answer me that, will you?"

"Nothing could be——"

"Don't be dodging around me any longer. I won't have any evasions."

"You see, Walter——" said Sister Becky.

"He won't see anything," interrupted Susy; "he's determined not to come to the point. Why don't you answer my argument?"

"Which argument, Miss Brinn? What was it?"

"Dear me! you've confused me so. What was I saying, aunty?"

"Why, Walter," said Becky, delighted at being invited to the floor, "it's high time that you should come to some conclusion about——"

"Yes, that's it. What's your conclusion? Speak directly. Are you convinced, or are you not?"

"I am convinced that you are the most beautiful and——"

"Hear him, aunty! Isn't he hateful? Will you answer me or not?"

"Please put your question once more."

"What conclusion have you come to?"

"Conclusion about what?"

"Why—about being baptized, of course."

"I have not heard any question raised in regard to baptism, Miss Brinn, certainly not in this place; but if you desire, I'll examine the subject."

"Oh! dear," said Susy, falling back disconsolately into my great chair, "it's always the way. You never can put two consecutive ideas into a man's head."

"What's the matter, child?" said I, entering at this juncture; "why are you badgering Walter so?"

"He won't say what he thinks, uncle—after all the trouble you have had with him, too."

"Ladies," I inquired, "is this a regular meeting of our circle or not? I thought we had broken up."

"No!" exclaimed Susy.

"What do you say, sister?"

"No, brother; I hope not."

"And you, Walter?"

"Well, I say no, too. I was about to inform these ladies, when some convenient pause should arrive in the conversation——"

"Did you ever!"

"——that I have been deeply impressed with your proofs of the authenticity of the Old Testament. I do not see how they can be answered, directly. Of course, if the Old Testament be once admitted, the New must follow, for one dispensation supposes the other. In fact, I am almost prepared to say that I do believe the Bible to be a divine Book." He spoke very slowly, measuring every word.

It was not in Susy Brinn's excitable nature to keep her seat at this. She bounded to the floor, and—I cannot say she clapped her hands—they fairly buzzed. "Did you hear that? Did you hear that? Aunt, he believes it! he believes it! he does! Uncle Bird, he does! he does! he do—es!!" It would be impossible to convey any adequate notion of how Susy looked, and spoke. She commenced with something like a shriek, dropped suddenly to the level of a joyous groan when appealing to Becky, rose again to the highest articulation point to fall once more, shaking out the last word from between her teeth as if she were trying to bite it in two. Then, turning dizzily to throw her arms about me, she drove her head most uncomfortably into the region of my diaphragm. From me darting upon my sister like a bee upon a clover-top, their mouths remained glued together for the usual space of a bee's

visit, when she took flight again, and settled in the farthest corner of the room, where, somewhat abashed, she took time to rest and repair damages.

Walter was greatly moved by the effect he had produced. There was moisture in his eyes, and his voice faltered somewhat as he continued.

"I do not wish to be misunderstood. I hope that I have not gone too far in saying that I believe the Old Testament. The positive proofs in its favor seem to me conclusive, but my mind is embarrassed by difficulties coming from a new quarter, and I am anxious to have them solved."

"Well now," said Becky, "hear that! It's astonishing how difficult some things are to some folks. If you'll only reflect, Walter, that the Bible is the word of God, all your difficulties will disappear at once. Don't you think so, Susy?" But Susy remained in her corner, and refused to commit herself.

"My difficulties," said Walter, "are found in certain late discoveries in natural science, which have developed new objections to the Old Testament history, especially to the Book of Genesis. You know, I suppose, what they are, Sir. You have read of them."

"I have studied them, my boy," I replied, "most carefully. If you like, we will take them up."

"And continue our meetings, as before?"

"Yes; but with a new arrangement. I must insist upon dispensing with the attendance of these ladies. We shall get along better without them."

My sister seemed surprised and hurt. Susy Brinn's eyes opened wide with wonder. She looked game too; and I was already mapping out a possible line of retreat, when Walter interfered.

"Don't think of it, Sir, I beg of you. Our Saturday evenings would lose all their sunshine."

"Moonshine, Walter," I suggested; "the sun does not shine so late at this season."

"The luminaries I speak of do, Sir. They are tropical, you know. Indeed, Uncle Jonathan, I feel most sincerely grateful for the interest these ladies manifest in me, to say nothing of your own; and you may be sure that the convictions of my mind will not be in the least retarded by it."

"The dear boy!" purred Sister Becky.

"Nor will they be accelerated, aunty."

"Try and be a little pig-headed, of course. You wouldn't be interesting otherwise." This shot came from the far corner.

"Susy," said I, "shut up. The thing is all agreed upon. And what shall we take up next Saturday evening?"

"One of the difficulties I have referred to is the different antiquity ascribed to the world by the Book of Genesis and by the students of nature."

"A fig for the students," said Becky. "The half of them ought to be kept at home and made to work. They'd give the world less trouble, and be more comfort to their mothers. Don't be led about by the students, Walter. I can tell you how old the world is. It was just 4,000 years old when our dear Lord was born, and it is now 1862 years older. Let me see! Two's a two; six is a six; eight's an eight; and four and one is five. That makes 5,862, exactly."

"Very good arithmetic, Sister Becky; but next Saturday I'll show you that the world is much older."

"It's old enough to be wiser."

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE ANTIQUITY OF THE WORLD.<sup>1</sup>

"He seemed as he wi' Time had warstled lang,  
Yet toughly doure, he bade an unco bang."

*The Briggs of Ayr.*

THE ancient Greeks in their day had very limited notions of the extent of the universe. The top of Olympus they thought could not be far from the seat of the celestial gods. Hesiod tells us so expressly; and yet in another place his conceptions of space become somewhat grander and more truthful, and he gives us the following as a measure of the distance from heaven to earth:

"A brazen anvil rushing from the sky  
Through thrice three days would toss in airy whirl,  
Nor touch this earth till the tenth sun arose."

Baron Humboldt has made a calculation upon this estimate of the poet's, and finds that Hesiod's heaven lies one and a half times the distance of the moon from the earth.<sup>2</sup> What an inadequate notion this of the deep, deep firmament of heaven! Astronomers, basing their statements on very close and accurate calculations, assure us that the light of the stars, which travels at a far greater speed than gravitation could give it, has a much longer

<sup>1</sup> The contents of this and the next four chapters have been contributed already in great part to the January and April numbers of Brownson's Quarterly Review for 1863

<sup>2</sup> Cosmos, vol. iii, p. 270.

and farther fall than the anvil. A ray from Sirius, one of the nearest, makes a passage of some 14 years before it reaches us.<sup>1</sup> But when our natural eyesight is aided by the telescope, we can penetrate much farther into the starry spaces. The great reflector of Sir William Herschel enabled him to extend his observations to nebulous clusters of stars lying many thousand times the distance of Sirius. Rays from these, therefore, must have been long ages on their way before arriving at our earth. Sir William calculated this time by millions of years. And yet again since his day the still more powerful telescope of Lord Rosse has so far extended our vision, that what appeared to Herschel like *nebulae*, or unformed clouds of star-dust, have been resolved into compact and perfect suns, while still farther away in the distance new clouds of worlds float in upon the scene. Who shall calculate the length of time elapsed since the far-travelled rays from these border stars first parted from their homes? Such discovered facts in astronomy have given birth to the following verse in Faber's "Dream of Prince Amadis:"

"He met rays of light falling earthward like tears,  
That had been on their travels thirty millions of years,  
Cleaving like lightning the thin purple gloom,  
Yet would hardly reach earth until after the Doom."

"These events in the universe," Humboldt murmurs, "belong to other periods of time; they reach us like voices of the past. \* \* \* It remains more than probable, from the knowledge we possess of the velocity of the transmission of luminous rays, that the light of remote heavenly bodies presents us with the most ancient perceptible evidence of the existence of matter."<sup>2</sup>

This last conclusion, the ejaculation of a charmed

<sup>1</sup> *Cosmos*, vol. iv, p. 353, note.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* vol. i, pp. 144, 145.

spirit, is after all no more than a conjecture ; for, so far as we can tell, geology points back to an antiquity as remote as anything revealed by astronomy, and some of the older rocks of this our earth, her long and wasted vestments, are left to us now, it may be, as the forms and fashions of an epoch far earlier than the exodus of any starry ray that has visited us yet. Geology is the younger science, but she has grown in our day like a young giantess, and the success of her votaries every year is commensurate with their wonderful activity. "Some rin up hill and down dale," said the old landlady described by Scott in St. Ronan's well, "knapping the chucky stanes to pieces wi' hammers, like sae mony road-makers run daft ; they say it is to see how the world was made." They could not very well see how it was first made, but they have discovered something of the process of its growth, and unravelled a great deal of its past history. Let us see what they say in regard to the point we have in hand.

It is a thing in which all geologists agree, that a careful examination of the earth's crust, that is to say, of those parts lying near its surface which are accessible to observation, leads irresistibly to the conclusion that it has existed during vast periods which cannot be expressed by any known method of computing time. Compared to this long-protracted existence the six or seven thousand years commonly ascribed to human history is but a brief hour. But we will state the case, as far as possible, in the very language of the geologists :

"All are aware," says Sir Charles Lyell, "that the solid parts of the earth consist of distinct substances, such as clay, chalk, sand, limestone, coal, slate, granite, and the like ; but previously to observation it is commonly imagined that all these had remained from the first in the state in which we now see them ; that they were created in

their present form, and in their present position. The geologist soon comes to a different conclusion, discovering proofs that the external parts of the earth were not all produced, in the beginning of things, in the state in which we now behold them, nor in an instant of time. On the contrary, he can show that they have acquired their actual configuration and condition gradually, under a great variety of circumstances, and at successive periods, during each of which distinct races of beings have flourished on the land and in the waters, the remains of these creatures still lying buried in the crust of the earth.

“The materials of this crust are not thrown together confusedly; but distinct mineral masses, called rocks, are found to occupy definite spaces and to exhibit a certain order of arrangement. The term rock is applied indifferently by geologists to all these substances, whether they be soft or strong, for sand and clay are included in the term.

“The aqueous rocks, sometimes called the sedimentary or fossiliferous, cover a larger part of the earth’s surface than any others. These rocks are *stratified*, or divided into distinct layers, or strata. The term stratum means simply a bed, or anything spread out or strewed over a given surface; and we infer that these strata have been generally spread out by the action of water, from what we daily see taking place near the mouths of rivers, or on the land during temporary inundations. For whenever a running stream, charged with mud or sand, has its velocity checked, as when it enters a lake or sea, or overflows a plain, the sediment, previously held in suspension by the motion of the water, sinks by its own gravity to the bottom. In this manner layers of mud and sand are thrown down one upon another.

“If we drain a lake which has been fed by a small



stream, we frequently find at the bottom a series of deposits, disposed with considerable regularity, one above the other: the uppermost perhaps may be a stratum of peat, next below a more dense and solid variety of the same material; still lower a bed of shell-marl, alternating with peat or sand, and then other beds of marl, divided by layers of clay. Now, if a second pit be sunk through the same continuous lacustrine *formation*, at some distance from the first, nearly the same series of beds is commonly met with, yet with slight variations; some, for example, of the layers of sand, clay, or marl, may be wanting, one or more of them having thinned out and given place to others, or sometimes one of the masses first examined is observed to increase in thickness to the exclusion of other beds.

“Where beds of sand, clay, and marl, containing shells and vegetable matter, are found arranged in a similar manner in the interior of the earth, we ascribe to them a similar origin; and the more we examine their characters in minute detail, the more exact do we find the resemblance. Thus, for example, at various heights and depths in the earth, and often far from seas, lakes, and rivers, we meet with layers of rounded pebbles composed of flint, limestone, granite, or other rocks, resembling the shingles of a sea-beach, or the gravel in a torrent's bed. Such layers of pebbles, frequently alternate with others formed of sand, or fine sediment, just as we may see in the channel of a river descending from hills bordering a coast, where the current sweeps down at one season coarse sand and gravel, while at another, when the waters are low and less rapid, fine mud and sand alone are carried seaward.

“If a stratified arrangement, and the rounded form of pebbles, are alone sufficient to lead us to the conclusion that certain rocks originated under water, this opinion is

further confirmed by the distinct and independent evidence of *fossils*, so abundantly included in the earth's crust. By a fossil is meant any body, or the traces of the existence of any body, whether animal or vegetable, which has been buried in the earth by natural causes. Now the remains of animals, especially of aquatic species, are found almost everywhere embedded in stratified rocks, and sometimes, in the case of limestone, they are in such abundance as to constitute the entire mass of the rock itself. Shells and corals are the most frequent, and with them are often associated the bones and teeth of fishes, fragments of wood, impressions of leaves, and other organic substances. Fossil shells, of forms such as now abound in the sea, are met with far inland, both near the surface, and at great depths below it. They occur at all heights above the level of the ocean, having been observed at elevations of more than 8,000 feet in the Pyrenees, 10,000 in the Alps, 13,000 in the Andes, and above 18,000 feet in the Himalaya.

“These shells belong mostly to marine testacea, but in some places exclusively to forms characteristic of lakes and rivers. Hence it is concluded that some ancient strata were deposited at the bottom of the sea, and others in lakes and estuaries.

“When geology was first cultivated, it was a general belief, that these marine shells and other fossils were the effects and proofs of the deluge of Noah; but all who have carefully investigated the phenomena have long rejected this doctrine. A transient flood might be supposed to leave behind it, here and there upon the surface, scattered heaps of mud, sand, and shingle, with shells confusedly intermixed; but the strata containing fossils are not superficial deposits, and do not simply cover the earth, but constitute the entire mass of mountains. Nor are the fossils mingled without reference to the original habits and na-

tures of the creatures of which they are the memorials; those, for example, being found associated together which lived in deep or in shallow water, near the shore or far from it, in brackish or in salt water.

“It has, moreover, been a favorite notion of some modern writers, who were aware that fossil bodies could not all be referred to the deluge, that they, and the strata in which they are entombed, might have been deposited in the bed of the ocean during the period which intervened between the creation of man and the deluge. They have imagined that the antediluvian bed of the ocean, after having been the receptacle of many stratified deposits, became converted, at the time of the flood, into the lands which we inhabit, and that the ancient continents were at the same time submerged, and became the bed of the present seas. This hypothesis, although preferable to the diluvial theory before alluded to, since it admits that all fossiliferous strata were successively thrown down from water, is yet wholly inadequate to explain the repeated revolutions which the earth has undergone, and the signs which the continents exhibit, in most regions, of having emerged from the ocean at an era far more remote than four thousand years from the present time. Ample proofs of these reiterated revolutions will be given in the sequel, and it will be seen that many distinct sets of sedimentary strata, hundreds, and sometimes thousands of feet thick, are piled one upon the other in the earth's crust, each containing peculiar fossil animals and plants of species distinguishable, for the most part, from all those now living. The mass of some of these strata consists almost entirely of corals, others are made up of shells, others of plants turned into coal, while some are without fossils. In one set of strata the species of fossils are marine; in another, lying immediately above or below, they as clearly prove

that the deposit was formed in a lake or brackish estuary. When the student has more fully examined into these appearances, he will become convinced that the time required for the origin of the rocks composing the actual continents must have been far greater than that which is conceded by the theory above alluded to ; and likewise that no one universal and sudden conversion of sea into land will account for geological appearances.”<sup>1</sup>

It is of course impossible, by any known measure of duration, to estimate the length of time required for the deposition of such vast masses of sedimentary rock ; but it is easy to show that the beginnings of this slow but un-resting process lie far back behind all reach of human history.

It must be borne in mind that the sedimentary rocks, with, of course, a large exception for what in them is composed of coral, sea shells, &c., have all been laid by water power, at the direct expense of the land, and that the same power, which has been so effective in filling up the beds of rivers, lakes, and seas, has been busy all the while in wearing down the hills and mountains. For it is evident that the supply of sand and other loose material so deposited by the waters must be equal to the waste of the same material washed from the hills and shores ; and the time required must be the same, as the two processes are carried on together. A carman would understand this at once, for it is only loading and dumping on a vast scale and a long contract. Now let us exert our imaginations to conceive how long a period it would require for the showers and streams to wash away all the substance of our mountains and continents that lies above the sea level, all at least that is stratified, and deducting what is derived from animals and plants of the water, and deposit it smoothly,

<sup>1</sup> Elem Geol., chap. i, pp. 1-5.

quietly, and gradually in thin sheets or laminae, in the lap of the ocean. Yet this would only be a repetition of what has actually taken place (to say nothing of what has often been undone and done over again), and affords us a rule by which we may arrive at some conception of the vast antiquity of our globe, compared with human history. For we know that during some thousands of years, within the experience of man, the earth has been undergoing this same process of waste and reconstruction, and yet without any very great change in its configuration. At the mouths of rivers, the currents have filled up, in a very perceptible degree, the ocean bed with their freight of sand, mud, and decayed vegetation; the mountain streams have spread new layers of alluvial soil over the valleys; and the ocean waves in return have encroached upon the dry land. Other agencies too have been at work, here and there under the earth's crust, and have elevated or depressed the surface of the land, or the ocean bed, but all the while the relative position of land and water throughout have undergone no essential change; the mountains stand in their old places, with their old features, and the earth is now very much the same as when the pyramids were built, and the walls of Nineveh were constructed. It is very evident, therefore, that neither six thousand years, nor a hundred thousand, would suffice to span the history of our planet.

Our conceptions of the high antiquity of the earth become still more enlarged, if we concentrate our attention upon some particular and familiar point on its surface, and note some single instance of the operation of these laws of waste and reconstruction. We shall see thus more definitely how changes that belong even to the present geological epoch, and are still going on before our eyes, have been in operation during immense periods of time, which run back far beyond all reach of history. Take, for

instance, that magnificent waterfall, the great wonder of our western world, where the waters issuing from Lake Erie descend one hundred and sixty-four feet at a single bound.

Few visitors to this country have used their eyes and ears so well and wisely, whether in observing men and manners, or in studying nature, as Sir Charles Lyell. "The Falls of Niagara," he remarks, "teach us not merely to appreciate the power of moving water, but furnish us at the same time with data for estimating the enormous lapse of ages during which that force has operated. A deep and long ravine has been excavated, and the river has required ages to accomplish the task, yet the same region affords evidence that the sum of these ages is as nothing, and as the work of yesterday, when compared to the antecedent periods of which there are monuments in the same district."<sup>1</sup>

A description of this grand cataract, with a plate, was given by Father Hennepin, a French missionary, as early as 1678, and in 1751 another by Kalm, a Swedish botanist, also accompanied by a plate. These show that some waste had been going on in the intermediate seventy-three years, making a visible change in the scene, and it is well known that changes are still taking place in the configuration of the cataract by the occasional fall of stone from the top. That the Falls are gradually shifting their position, and receding toward Lake Erie, is therefore an ascertained fact, which confirms and illustrates the general belief that they have, by a long process, been slowly eating their way backward through the woods for the distance of seven miles, thus forming that deep and narrow chasm which extends from the foot of the cataract to Queenstown. If this chasm were closed up again the Niagara would flow

<sup>1</sup> Trav. in N. Amer. in 1841-'2.

onward as far as Queenstown, over the solid platform of rock, without a fall, and the banks of the stream would lie far above their present position, more nearly on a level with the surrounding country, or the edge of the cliffs which bound the chasm. That this was once the case has been proved again and again by our American geologists. Abundant traces of the ancient banks of the river are found along the summit of the cliffs, consisting of deposits of sand, gravel, and fluviatile shells; and the shells correspond, in every respect, with those found upon the present banks of the river above the Falls.

The small portion of this great ravine which has been eaten away within the memory of man, affords a basis upon which can be formed a rough estimate of that lapse of time during which the Falls have receded to their present site. The present rate of retrogression was first calculated by Mr. Bakewell at three feet in the year, but Professor Hall and others make it only one. Of course, this movement cannot have been always uniform; but if the average rate for the whole distance from Queenstown may be assumed as lying between these two computations, then a period of from eleven to thirty-five thousand years would be required to accomplish this immense work of excavation. This already carries us back far enough to upset all our old chronological systems, which pretend to date from the creation, and yet, compared to the whole period of the earth's existence, it is but the last hour of a long lifetime. It leaves still untouched those countless ages wherein were formed, in the lap of the ocean, those different rocks of sandstone, shale, and limestone, through which the Falls have since gnawed their way back from Queenstown to their present site, rocks which existed in hoary antiquity before ever the Niagara river appeared upon the scene, or the great lakes which that river drains.

If, instead of reasoning upon the mechanical powers of nature, we turn our attention to those fossil forms of animal life entombed within the rocks, we arrive at the same stupendous results. "However much," concludes Sir Charles, "we may enlarge our ideas of the time which has elapsed since the Niagara first began to drain the waters of the upper lakes, we have seen that this period was only one of a series, all belonging to the present zoological epoch, or that in which the living testaceous fauna, whether fresh-water or marine, had already come into being. If such events can take place, while the zoology of the earth remains almost stationary and unaltered, what ages may not be comprehended in those successive Tertiary periods during which the flora and fauna of the globe have been almost entirely changed!"<sup>1</sup> Yet how subordinate a place in the long calendar of geological chronology do the successive Tertiary periods occupy! How much more enormous a duration must we assign to many antecedent revolutions of the earth and its inhabitants! No analogy can be found in the natural world to the immense scale of these divisions of past time, unless we contemplate the celestial spaces which have been measured by the astronomer."<sup>2</sup>

The geologist has no need to go far to awaken in his soul those deep and solemn emotions which others feel at the contemplation of ancient cities, or castles in ruins. Sublimar ruins are under his feet wherever he treads. Not only every waterfall, but each quarry, bank, and coal mine opens to his view the wreck of ancient worlds. Every

<sup>1</sup> The Tertiary is the uppermost and latest of several systems into which geologists divide the strata or beds of rock. The character of the fossils contained in these strata, corresponds with the relative order of superposition, and constitutes the principle of classification by which these systems are distinguished.

<sup>2</sup> Trav. in N. Amer., vol. i, chap. ii, p. 43.



mountain is to him a vast mausoleum within whose compact masonry are stored away the dead of bygone ages.

“Wondrous and awful are thy silent halls,  
O kingdom of the past !  
There lie the bygone ages in their palls,  
Guarded by shadows vast—  
There all is hushed and breathless.”

There lie beings who lived and breathed on this earth of ours, before ever any species of beast, bird, or fish that the earth now knows had come into existence—creatures that crept on the land before our present continents were raised above the sea—creatures that swarmed in the water before the beds of our present lakes and oceans were formed. The same good God gladdened the creatures of those early ages that gladdens our world now. For them the sun shone, and the rain fell, and the land and the water was stored with food for their nourishment. They had each one his brief day, and then slept with their fathers ; some mouldering away to dust upon the hard ground, some sinking to their sepulchres in the soft morass, the river bed, or ocean bottom, where many were preserved from total decay until nature had time to form moulds around them, in which stony castings could be taken to perpetuate their likenesses to our day. How brief their little span of life, compared to those endless ages during which they have reposed in their rocky sepulchres ! Alas ! our space of life is equally brief, our possession of the earth as frail ; our title to it indeed less ancient than theirs.

“We have no title deeds to house or lands.  
Owners and occupants of earlier dates,  
From graves forgotten stretch their dusty hands,  
And hold in mortmain still their old estates.”

## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE HIGH ANTIQUITY OF THE WORLD CONTROVERTED.

“ This passed for certain, undisputed ;  
It ne'er cam i' their heads to doubt it,  
Till chieils gat up and wad confute it,  
An' ca'd it wrang ;  
And muckle din there was about it,  
Baith loud and lang.”

BURNS.

THE office of a Justice of the Peace in the country is, no doubt, a very honorable and responsible one, but subject nevertheless to many vexations. My next week was so taken up with complaints and lawsuits that, when Saturday came, I had no essay to produce. Walter, however, declared that he was not sorry, for he had a few questions to ask, before he would call on me to explain the seeming contradiction between Genesis and Geology. Our conversation that evening was in substance as follows :

“ Am I to understand, Uncle Bird, that this vast antiquity of the earth is admitted by the friends of the Mosaic revelation ? ”

“ Why—yes ; many certainly do admit it. There are also, undoubtedly, many who deny it—many very excellent minds, too, in their way, and of good judgment where they are well informed.”

“ On what grounds, pray, do they deny it ? ”

“ Mainly upon grounds of religious belief, considering that the contrary is revealed in Holy Scripture. Their quarrel with the geologist is thus stated by Cowper :

“Some drill and bore  
The solid earth, and from the strata there  
Extract a register, by which we learn  
That He who made it, and revealed its date  
To Moses, was mistaken in its age.”<sup>1</sup>

“And how do they avoid the conclusions drawn by science from nature?”

“In different ways,” I answered, “according to the genius of the parties. Some, like rough nurses, try to smother it up, or threaten to call in the Black Man. Of those who offer arguments, some oppose upon geological grounds, and some upon more abstractly philosophical grounds. Of the first of these latter two classes it must be said that they are not geologists, and therefore occupy a very disadvantageous position. To dispute the conclusions of geologists upon principles which are independent of geology, is to maintain war upon equal ground; but to contest against them all within the strict domains of their own science, and with their own weapons, is a warfare more valiant than hopeful.”

“I am curious to know how they set about it.”

“You saw in last Saturday’s essay some of the errors that prevailed in the early stages of geology, even among scientific men. It is a pity that so many, not scientific men indeed, although intelligent, should still be found advocating the same errors.”

“I remember,” said Walter, “the statement of these errors, and the refutation. My curiosity is to know the manner in which they proceed to press geology into the support of their theories.”

“It would weary you to hear much of it, and besides, to one not acquainted with the science, it would require a whole chapter of explanation to refute a single sentence of

<sup>1</sup> The Task, book iii—“The Garden.”

misstatement. I will give you one example only. The author of a recent book published in New York, and directed against the geologists, denies the whole theory of the gradual deposition of the aqueous rocks in water, and confidently asserts that the lines of jointure and cleavage, so called, afford as good proof of being produced by deposition, as those which we name "lines of stratification." Now a stranger who had never seen real piles of pancakes, if shown one in a picture, might not be able to distinguish well between the planes produced by the griddle, and the sections produced afterward by the knife, and very plausible arguments might be produced to mystify him in the matter of pancake making. But a cook who had often watched the different processes of deposition, and cleavage, on the griddle and the plate, would easily distinguish the signs of those processes wherever she met them. So it is very conceivable that readers who have never studied the rocks in the field, nor perhaps even the principles of geology as laid down in the elementary books, may not be able to weigh the value of such ignorant assertions as the above. It is nevertheless manifestly unreasonable to pay any serious attention to them at all, the moment they are discovered to be in contradiction to the united testimony of geological observers throughout the world."

"Such lucubrations afford good occasion to laugh, to such readers as know better."

"I fear, Walter, they are quite as likely to engender skepticism in religion, because they are put forth commonly in its defence. They place the cause of revelation in a false position before the world by allying it to ignorance and quackery. Truth is always precious, even when it concerns only matters of physical science, for truth is the aliment of the mind. To present us falsehood and nonsense in place of it is under any circumstances an offence,

although we may sometimes laugh at it; but when this is done with the authority of a master in the name of the Bible, and with threats of divine wrath, it becomes unendurable. No wonder that some, who are better acquainted with astronomy and geology than with the foundations of the Christian religion, should rebel and exclaim indignantly:

‘And this is then thy faith! this monstrous creed,  
This lie against the sun, and moon, and stars,  
And earth, and heaven!’

“There are others better acquainted indeed with the grand facts and fundamental principles of geology, who nevertheless object to the modern method of classifying rocks according to their antiquity as determined by their fossil contents. These insist that the relative ages of formations which do not lie in juxtaposition and overlap each other, but even lie in far separated localities, cannot be so determined, and that they may be contemporary however widely their fossils may differ.<sup>1</sup> Their objection, however well founded, would not help them in this present question. The extreme age of the earth is proved quite independently of this rule, as will be seen by referring to last Saturday’s essay. There, for example, to the many thousands of years during which the great Falls on the Niagara river have been working their way backward from Queenstown to their present site, we were still obliged to add a vast previous period which must have elapsed while those rocks were forming which underlie the Falls and the river. This estimate is quite independent of any question of fossils, or of any other locality. The proofs all lie on the very spot.

“Let us now pass on to another class of objectors.

<sup>1</sup> See Sacred Cosmogony. Translated from the French of L’Abbé Sorignet. St. Louis, 1862.

There are some that contest the extreme antiquity of the earth upon different grounds, where they have as much right to feel at home as the geologist, whatever may be the value of their arguments."

"Who are they?"

"They take their stand upon a point of religious philosophy. Granting all the data furnished by the geologist—admitting that, according to all natural appearances, the earth presents signs of a vast antiquity, they deny that these appearances can be trusted in the present case; because, as they argue, all reasoning from apparent effects to secondary causes in nature must cease when we arrive at the point of creation, where God himself stands as the immediate cause of all."

"Please explain," said Walter. "I see why, at the moment of creation, God must himself have stood as immediate cause of all he created. But was there, think you, anything at that moment, which pointed back to secondary causes, or seemed to do so?"

"Under the supposition that all things were simultaneously created, and in their perfect state, it must be so, I should think. So at least it is reasoned. All organic creatures are constituted upon a plan which supposes development or growth, and they all bear marks of it upon them. The first perfect creature of every kind must, even when just created, have exhibited the signs of an earlier and more imperfect state; in other words, the marks of age, although as yet it had no age. So must it have been with the first man, the first bird, the first fish, the first tree. The first tree, although it never grew, must have exhibited the rings of annual growth. The same apparent marks of increase would be found in the hair, the nails, the teeth and other parts of the first man, in the feather of the parent bird of every species, and in fine in the organism of every

creature at its first production ; and there would be marks of an increase and an age, which had had no existence in reality, but only by plan or archetype, in the mind of the Creator."

"But why must we suppose these things or anything created in a state of maturity, or perfection?"

"The world needed a start. The first colt and first calf, if so created without dams, would have perished for want of milk, and if they escaped that distress would have famished while the grass was growing. So the birds needed worms, and the worms needed leaves, and the leaves needed other things in full formation, and so on *ad infinitum*. And even if we suppose the first creatures of each species not to have been produced in a state of maturity, we cannot escape from the same conclusion. Which will you suppose first in existence, the hen or the egg, the apple or the seed, the butterfly or the chrysalis, the fish or the spawn? Was the egg first? That first egg would have furnished indications, as eggs do now, of having proceeded from the present hen, while yet no such hen was. Was the hen first? Then she must have manifested in every bone, muscle, and feather the marks of gradual growth, terminating backward in the egg; and yet no such egg there was. What may be said of different creatures upon the earth, may be said of the earth herself. All reasoning backward from apparent effects in nature to secondary causes must cease with the creative act. There the great first cause, God himself, stands in solitary and immediate relation to the effect. Believing that we have sufficient grounds in sacred history to place the creation of the world at a period not exceeding 7,000 years ago, the phenomena of geology cannot change the result. Creation must have begun at some point in the past. The same seeming difficulties will present themselves necessarily,

however far we carry back the date of creation. We may, therefore, as well leave it where our fathers supposed it to be, and where the Scripture chronology appears to indicate. Such is the argument."

"What do you think of it?" said Walter. "Is it not a forcible one?"

"It seems so at first sight; but its fatal fault is, that it does not fully and fairly present the phenomena upon which the geologist bases his conclusions. He finds in the earth, not merely the indications of slow growth to maturity, *but marks of decay and death, and the relics also of organic beings to which the living world affords no counterparts.* That the first trees, or such of them as were created in the advanced state, would bear the rings of apparent annual growth is reasonable enough, and the first man, if created the next Friday after, would not have been astonished to see them; but he would have been startled to see on those trees the remains of birds' nests which had never been inhabited, or the marks of hatchets which had never existed, or lying at its roots the bones of creatures that could never have lived. He would have been surprised to see any marks of ruin and decay, knowing that the world was newly born. There could be as little reason to create withered leaves, and rotten stumps and mouldered bones, as to create man himself with bald head, decayed teeth, and a wooden leg."

"Adam, methinks, would have found little reason in that."

"But above all, my dear boy, what reason to create the ruined semblances of things which had no counterpart in the living creation? But now, let us look into the rocks, and study these fossils. They have a language; let them speak.

"As far as history carries us back, from the earliest



ages of our race we find that the animals inhabiting the earth have been the same in kind with those now living. The book of nature tells the same story. Here and there we find, bleaching on the hard ground, covered with the drifted sand, or embedded in the soft alluvial soil, the remains of the same creatures that share the earth with us now. All the features of animated nature have remained the same as now, for many thousands of years. But it has not always been so. Below this surface-soil the investigator soon reaches more ancient graveyards, where the species contemporary with us are found no longer, and the remains of other creatures of different type appear. And so on, as he continues to descend through the various strata of rocks with which the earth is coated, each deeper sepulchre reveals the fossil remains of an older world of creatures, wrapped in their stony shrouds. Now, let it be remarked, these rocks contain, not only the signs and shapes of living creatures, but the monuments also of their lives and actions."

"What actions?"

"Why, eating, for example. It might be inferred that they were given to eating from the fact that they have stomachs. I have seen in Prof. Hall's cabinet at Albany, a section of the spiral stomach of a fossil crinoid, showing perfectly the mechanical arrangement of the interior. A more beautiful thing saw I never in living nature. If an alderman were suddenly petrified in the height of the season, his stomach could not give more unequivocal proofs of being made for use."

"A petrified alderman's stomach would show signs of turtle," suggested Susy.

"Well, that would be nothing strange in paleontology," I replied. "The remains of animals have been discovered with undigested food in the stomach, fragments of smaller

creatures, or grass rolled up into balls. That digestion was not always so rudely interrupted is demonstrated in the fossil coprolites, which are found in great abundance. Now, coprolites are nothing else than petrified dung. They too, are sometimes found to contain the fragmentary remains of other animals, and these of just such species as must naturally have served for food to the first. Such artificial ruins as these, such types of creatures that never were made, such traces of occurrences that never happened, are they necessary? If we must needs hold to the idea of a world created in maturity and perfection, are these things necessary to carry it out?"

"No; surely not."

"If I could only lay before you a fair picture of the underground world, as it is sometimes seen at great advantage by the geologist, where the fossiliferous rocks crop out in a ravine, or on some mountain-side, it would help you much to a fair view of this question. In such places we often find these depositories of the dead lying ranged above each other, with their fossil contents classified as neatly as on the shelves of a cabinet, and far more tastefully. I will try to give you an idea of one of these localities, for, although they contain no precious metals to give them a value in the market, yet to a thoughtful mind the wonders to be found there possess a deeper interest, and we may apply to them the graceful and appreciative lines of Pope:

'Pretty in amber to observe the forms  
Of hairs, or straws, or dirt, or grubs, or worms:  
The things, we know, are neither rich nor rare,  
But—wonder how the mischief they got there!'

"About a mile to the north of the village of Schoharie in the State of New York, all isolated and alone, a noble

hill called Hanson's Mountain (so the village landlord named it) rears its lofty back above the plain, appearing, in the dusk of evening, like some gigantic sperm whale that has risen above the smooth surface to collect breath. Here—I will sketch it off for you on a piece of paper—so ! ”

“ Let me see,” said Susy, peering over my shoulder.

“ Well, little cricket, look ! You may lean on me, too, but keep your feet still. You are as restless as a humming-bee. This mountain was not upreared from below. It constituted once but a small portion of a vast level platform, extending far away and connecting it with other high land which still lies skirting the plain, but broken up like itself into hills. Nature has formed this mountain by scooping out the surrounding valleys. To the southward, behind the village, you may ascend by easy steps the more gradual slope of the opposite hill, and you will find it composed of the same series of rocks as Hanson's Mountain, lying in horizontal strata upon the same level, and with the same fossil contents, thus proving their former connection. From this distance, even, you may clearly trace with the eye, on the steep sides of that mountain, the lines which separate each rock from the underlying and overlying formations. The bare rock does not itself appear, except where, about midway between the summit and the foot, one long line of precipices stretches across half the length of the hill, consisting of two ranges of limestone, mounted one upon the other, and broken each into pretty even joints, which show like rows of teeth.”

“ Show us with the pencil,” said Susy.

“ Well, then, there you have it. The other lines of separation are nearly all equally distinct. The several strata being of different composition, some harder, some

softer, have resisted with different degrees of force the wear of time, and always new angles in the slope, or changes in the vegetation, mark the mountain with distinct rings, by which, even in the distance, can be reckoned up its chief component formations, and their points of junction distinguished. Hanson's Mountain is a vast mausoleum, a thousand times older, larger by far, and every way more interesting than the great Pyramid. It is divided into eleven stories or lofts of rock, all of them crowded receptacles of the dead. I have collected specimens there, and you shall see them. Susy, pull out that drawer behind you—the upper one, dear—and set it on this table.

“At the base, and occupying the first or lowest quarter of the hill, lies the ‘Hudson River group,’ slates of great extent, which skirt the Hudson from the Highlands upward, and reach along the same valley to the Canada line. They yield this little fossil called *graptolite*, a creature never found above the Silurian system. It looks like a quill, or in some species more like a saw, stamped upon the leaves of the slate. Now and then also a *trilobite* is found, a little monster crab fish. Its body consists apparently of three distinct lobes or divisions, contracting to a point behind, where the tail fits on. The shell which encloses it is formed like a ribbed coat of mail, the pieces carefully fitted together and riveted at the juncture of the lobes. Its head presents somewhat the appearance of a general's cocked hat, and its eyes seem like two conical little castles or lighthouses, set about with numerous facets or lenses, like those of a fly. But wait! I have one to show you; here it is.”

“Why! the nasty bug!” said Becky; “what wicked eyes it has! Don't let it come near me!”

“It is only a fossil, sister.”

"I'll have no such fossils around this house, I can tell you. I'll take the dusting brush to them."

"It is very like life, indeed," said Walter,—

'The figure of the eye has motion in't  
As we are mocked with art.'

"Why, so I think. Any one who can look at a perfect specimen of this fierce little pirate of the Silurian seas—such his appearance bespeaks him—and say he never lived, would certainly never be convinced by Paley's argument of the watch. Next above the slates in this hill are found rocks belonging to the Niagara and Onondaga salt groups. The Niagara River falls over these same formations at the other extremity of the State. They also are the tombs of creatures of many generations, corals, trilobites, and mollusks of various forms, that must have lived once in the sea. The fourth loft of this mausoleum is composed of a dark limestone, the laminæ of which are completely besprinkled with little fossil annelids called *tentaculites*; sea worms are they with shelly, annulated tubes. Their forms are beautifully defined, and fairly sparkle in the sun, as you draw the slabs fresh and damp from the quarry. It is the characteristic creature of this rock, although by no means the only one.

"In the chamber above lie, gathered close and snug, shells of a kind called *Pentamerus*. It is divided into five distinct cavities, and in the species here abounding has a remarkable beak on the upper valve which hangs over the hinge like the crest of a fairy helmet. The limestone next overhead is a crowded repository of shell fish and corals so conspicuous and abundant, that where this rock is made up into fences the roadside becomes a cabinet of curiosities, which the traveller must be dull indeed to pass unnoticed. Above this again another limestone bed

is almost entirely composed of *encrinites*, a kind of lily or cup-shaped zoophite, which must, in its day, have lived attached to the sea bottom, and swayed back and forth upon its cable-like stem as such creatures now do, waving its jointed arms and fingers like a blind robber feeling for its prey. The separated tentacles and columns of these encrinites are not unlike rosaries, and so acquired in Scotland, as Sir Walter Scott tells us, the name of St. Cuthbert's beads :

‘ But fain St. Hilda’s nuns would learn  
If, on a rock by Lindisfarn,  
St. Cuthbert sits, and toils to frame  
The sea-born beads that bear his name :  
Such tales had Whitby’s fishers told.’

“ The scene changes wonderfully as you ascend into the next story, which is built of sandstone. It is the beginning of a new grand division in the rocks. You have passed from the graveyards of the Silurian ages, and have entered the Devonian, where new and widely different types of life are entombed. Here repose the petrified remains of shell fish of various shapes, bivalved and spiral ; and wherever the rock has become rotten by long exposure to the weather, the forms of these long-buried creatures stand out in bold relief like living things. Let me show you a few specimens of this sandstone, which I have brought away from this same neighborhood. Have you ever seen a snail or any spiral shell from land or sea more perfect in shape than this little petrification ? The geologists have named it *Acroculia* or *Platyceras*. It is, nevertheless, only a cast of the interior, as you can easily perceive, and not so highly ornamental as the exterior would be. The casting was executed by the hand of nature. The original shell was the mould. The sea washed it full of sand, and then furnished the lime to cement the sand

together. That other long and graceful shell is the upper valve of a creature named by Prof. Hall *Rensselaeria*, in honor of the Albany Patroon. Mark well the parallel ridges that run along its back, converging as they approach the slender hinge, and diminishing in size, until at last the eye can scarcely distinguish the delicate tracery! What think you? Is it a real shell, or a counterfeit?"

"It was once a real shell," said Walter; "no sophistry can cheat me out of the conviction that some living creature once lay beneath it."

"Now look at this other weathered and yellow fragment of sandstone! Holding it out at a distance, does it not look like a crowded nest of little birds just fledged, and spreading their wings to fly? When you see such wing-like shells, with long, straight, elegant hinges, and depressed like these in the centre of the valve, you may thereby recognize the *Spirifer*. It is found in many other rocks both older and later than this, but not of the same species, not with such high eagle-like beaks. There is much to be seen on this little three-inch fragment of stone. Here we have both valves united, and here is an interior cast of one with a part of the shell adhering, which makes it look like a gay cape hanging low upon naked shoulders. This fragment of a shell next to it shows us the groined ceiling on the inside of the spirifer's mansion, and see that little serpula clinging to it, which shows that after the spirifer died, his shell must have lain exposed some while on the sea bottom, before it was covered by the sand, long enough at least for his body to decay, after which this little worm crawled in and lodged in the deserted hall. Such is the natural conclusion, unless we suppose both the serpula, and the shell he clings to, to be the simulated corpses of creatures that never lived."

"I'll not believe it," said Walter.

"The chamber next overhead is a storehouse of seaweeds, which have received the undignified but not inappropriate name of *cocktails*. Not very far from Schoharie village to the southeastward, a cross road will lead you for a quarter of a mile over this same rock, washed bare and smooth, on which these weeds lie impressed in red, or buff-colored print, as thickly as the figures in a carpet, or on the ornamental tiles of a church floor. Each cocktail has a stiff defiant look, such as a real tail might be supposed to have, if cut off while the wearer was in full strut. So comically true is the caricature, that I own, when I saw them first, like moody Jaques on meeting Touchstone in the forest of Arden,

'My lungs began to crow like chanticleer.'

"One story higher the Schoharie grit, so called, encloses other and peculiar types of ancient life. Passing by the rest, it is enough to mention the fossil fish *Asterolepis*, the remains of which are found in this rock as in the contemporary formations of Europe."<sup>1</sup>

"Where! where! which is it?" cried Susy.

"I didn't find any, dear, the day I was there."

"Oh, why not?" said she impatiently.

"I had the wrong bait, I suppose, for this kind of fish, but I can show you a plate of it. It is a gigantic fish of the same order with the pike, or the sturgeon, but utterly unlike any creature in life, or any fossil found outside this Devonian system of formations. So perfectly the constituent parts of the animal have been preserved in stone, that the paleontologists give us, not only plates and descriptions of its larger bones, its jaws, the plates of its head and scales of its body, but magnified delineations

<sup>1</sup> Murchison's *Siluria*, ch. xvi.



even of the tubercles of its bony skin, of the microscopic hollows in the texture of its teeth, and of its coprolites, that is to say, the refuse of its food, containing the broken scales of other fish on which it preyed. Did God create this singular creature in a state of death, Walter—a mere model in stone of a thing that never was, and was never to be?”

“One were wild to think it.”

“The crest of this mountain is occupied by the ‘Corniferous Limestone,’ so named because of the many courses of hornstone nodules which it contains. It is fossiliferous also. Coiled shells, and huge trilobites from this rock, respond to the knocks of the hammer. These are the only rocks that constitute the mountain; but beneath the slates which lie at its base, New York counts seven formations more cropping out at other points of her territory, ending with the Potsdam sandstone, the lowest, as some suppose, of the fossiliferous rocks. Of these I will only mention the two from which I have made collections. The Trenton limestone is charged full with fossil shells of various shapes and sizes, bivalved and spiral, and wreathed and whorled. The many-chambered Nautilus is abundantly represented, but being uncoiled he takes the name of Orthoceras. The trilobite appears here in his grandest proportions. The little Giant<sup>1</sup> (his friends the geologists have named him so) is a foot long or more, and armed *cap-a-pie*, for his rear is helmeted like his head, and could scarcely be distinguished from it, except for the absence of those tower-like eye cones. He needed no eyes in the rear, it would seem; for, notwithstanding the primitive age he lived in, he must have been a progressive fish, and pushed forward his Napoleonic ideas with energy. Even now, after the lapse of so many ages, his influence still

<sup>1</sup> This species is styled *Isotelus gigas*.

rules, for the geologists affirm that he gives character to this rock.<sup>1</sup>

“Associated in position with the Trenton, and under it lies the dark stone so magnificently developed on the banks of the Black River at Watertown. The orthoceras of the rock above is here become a monster in size; specimens have been found not less than twenty feet in length. Look at this longitudinal section of one! You may see how the chambers are arranged one after the other, and apparently unconnected, but this transverse section shows you how the partition floors, or rather walls, are arranged with a round scuttle or gangway in the middle. But the animal used this passage only once in his life, and that on May-day when he moved, for he was always adding new chambers to his house, and only occupied the last one built. Such have always been the habits of these creatures of the cuttle-fish order, and the orthoceras is of the straightest of that sect.”

“If this fish were lodged among our New York rocks, by the deluge of Noah,” said Walter, “it must be that every individual of the species was stranded at the same time, for surely never such wonders were seen alive since.”

“We have disposed of that theory already,” I replied. “We have now to deal with the idea that these things have been created under ground and in their fossil state.”

“And for what end?”

“Theologians tell us that God created all things first for his glory, and secondly although subordinately for the happiness of the creatures so produced.”

“I cannot conceive how either should be promoted by the creation of fossils, unmeaning semblances of living things that never existed.”

“I have heard it suggested by pious persons, Walter,

<sup>1</sup> Siluria, ch. xvi.

that God may have made fossils, in order to confound the wisdom of the wise."

"I believe indeed, uncle, that the wisdom of man is folly before God; but that is because of the infinite inferiority of our intellects, and our limited means of knowledge. The very order of nature has deep mysteries enough to check the presumption of philosophers. Could it be necessary to introduce disorder and deception into nature for such a purpose? This is the language of ignorance. Religion would be badly provided for, if left to such beetle-headed defenders."

"You cannot be persuaded, then, that this hill was created in just the state we have it now?"

"It would be a strange thought after having seen it so dissected. One might as well ask—did God create the pyramids as we find them?"

"Well! could he not?"

"He could. There is no absolute impossibility in it; but he did not."

"Why not?"

"Because we find clear proofs in the structure of the pyramids that they were built by human hands, and by slow degrees."

"What proofs?"

"We see how the stones have first been shaped, and then deposited one by one. The work is like the work of men; the marks of their tools are to be seen yet."

"We have the same proofs in the rocks. The geologists will show you triumphantly how one formation has been built up from the fragments and detritus of an older, all sorted, deposited, and cemented by slow process. The workmen, water, frost, ice, fire, and other agents, are known by sure signs. The work is like the work of nature; the marks of her tools are to be seen."

"We find mummies in the pyramids, embalmed bodies, which must have been deposited before the pyramids were closed up."

"Well, so we find mummies in the rocks, and better embalmed. They could never have got into the rocks after they were closed up. What mummies are better preserved than those of our Helderberg mountains?"

"The Egyptian mummies must have lived once. We cannot suppose them to have been created in a state of death."

"Why not? Some of our philosophers will find no difficulty in that supposition."

"Because they have all the signs of a former life upon them. You can even tell by their teeth how long they lived. Some mummies have them full set, sharp, and perfect, as young teeth are. Others have only a few left, and those decayed. Why should God create such traces of growth and decay, such signs of an early but unreal history in Egypt? They would be useless except to deceive us."

"I could show you plentiful instances, Walter, of the same in a good geological cabinet. Fossils are young and old. Those that have teeth show them either perfect in the young specimens, or more or less worn according to their years of life. Those that are not entitled to teeth have other marks to betray their age. You can be served, for instance, with trilobites of all ages, from half-formed babies to superannuated old crustacea. They have been traced through no less than twenty stages of development.<sup>1</sup> Why should God create in the earth such unreal signs of an early history, of ruin and decay, as well as of slow growth to perfection?"

"The parallel seems perfect indeed. But do not the

<sup>1</sup> Elem. Geol. Lyell, chap. xxvii, p. 451.

advocates of this theory undertake to give some reasons also for the creation of artificial ruins, and signs of decay ? ”

“ They do, after some fashion. Chateaubriand’s argument is the best I have seen, and I will give it to you in his own words. It constitutes an entire chapter entitled ‘ Youth and old age of the Earth.’ Reach me down that large octavo in black binding—fourth shelf ! There—read :

“ ‘ We now come to the third objection, relative to the modern origin of the globe. The earth, it is said, is an aged nurse who betrays her antiquity in everything. Examine her fossils, her marbles, her granites, her lavas, and you will discover in them a series of innumerable years, marked by circles, strata, or branches, as the age of a serpent is determined by his rattles, that of a horse by his teeth, or that of a stag by his antlers.

“ ‘ This difficulty has been solved a hundred times by the following answer : *God might have created, and doubtless did create, the world with all the marks of antiquity and completeness which it now exhibits.*

“ ‘ What, in fact, can be more probable than that the Author of nature originally produced both venerable forests and young plantations, and that the animals were created, some full of days, others adorned with the graces of infancy ? The oaks, on springing from the fruitful soil, doubtless bore at once the aged crows and the new progeny of doves. Worm, chrysalis, and butterfly—the insect crawled upon the grass, suspended its golden egg in the forest, or fluttered aloft in the air. The bee, though she had lived but a morning, already gathered her ambrosia from generations of flowers. We may imagine that the ewe was not without her lamb, nor the linnet without her young ; and that the flowering shrubs concealed among their buds nightingales, astonished at the

warbling notes in which they expressed the tenderness of their first enjoyments.

“‘If the world had not been at the same time young and old, the grand, the serious, the moral would have been banished from the face of nature ; for these are ideas essentially inherent in antique objects. Every scene would have lost its wonders. The rock in ruins would no longer have overhung the abyss with its pendent herbage. The forests, stripped of their accidents, would no longer have exhibited the pleasing irregularity of trees curved in every direction, and of trunks bending over the currents of rivers. The inspired thoughts, the venerable sounds, the magic voices, the sacred awe of the forests, would have been wanting, together with the darksome bowers which serve for their retreats ; and the solitudes of earth and heaven would have remained bare and unattractive without those columns of oaks which join them together. We may well suppose that the very day the ocean poured its first waves upon the shores, they dashed against rocks already worn, over strands covered with fragments of shell fish, and around barren capes which protected the sinking coasts against the ravages of the waters.

“‘Without this original antiquity, there would have been neither beauty nor magnificence in the work of the Almighty ; and, what could not possibly be the case, nature in a state of innocence would have been less charming than she is in her present degenerate condition. A general infancy of plants, of animals, of elements, would have spread an air of dulness and languor throughout the world, and stripped it of all poetical inspiration. But God was not so unskilful a designer of the groves of Eden as infidels pretend. Man, the lord of the earth, was ushered into life with the maturity of thirty years, that the majesty of his being might accord with the antique grandeur of

his new empire ; and in like manner his partner, doubtless, shone in all the blooming graces of female beauty when she was formed from Adam, that she might be in unison with the flowers and the birds, with innocence and love, and with all the youthful part of the universe.' ”<sup>1</sup>

“Oh, charming !” cried Susy ; “ isn’t it beautiful ? ”

“It is, indeed ; but is it good argument ? ”

“Isn’t it, uncle ? ” she inquired timidly.

“I think not, Susy. M. Chateaubriand supposes, in the construction of the world, two necessities : the first is a necessity for the creation of the old, that is, the perfect or mature, as well as the young and undeveloped. This I could admit, at least in the case of organic things, for reasons which we have already discussed ; although I cannot see how this should account for the fossils. I cannot, for instance, see how a necessity to create the first rattlesnakes or some of them in the full-grown state (and with, I suppose, the rattles, which are in the after course of nature the annual marks of growth) should account for the existence of fossil reptiles of a type which the world has never seen since Adam. But he attempts also to show that the world must needs have been created with marks of ruin upon it, in order to correspond to good taste and the poetic sentiment. I am no poet, but having some pretension to good taste, I beg leave to differ from him. I do not doubt that Adam and his good lady could have enjoyed the sight of water-worn rocks, and beaches strewn with the wrecks of shells, at least if they believed them to be what they seemed ; but I cannot help thinking that the sentiment and the poetry of it would have been lost upon them, knowing, as they must, that all this appearance of the antique was got up for the occasion. Was not M. Chateaubriand aware that the sentiment of the antique

<sup>1</sup> Genius of Christianity, part i, b. iv, ch. 5.

attached to these things is derived from the association of ideas, and that there must be some experience or knowledge of the past, of the changes and vicissitudes of time, to awaken it? Can any one conceive of Adam sentimentalizing or moralizing over a deserted crow's nest, when the first crows that nature ever knew had scarcely had time as yet to build a nest? Whatever strength lies in this sentimental argument ought rather to prove that the world had really grown old before our first parents were created."

"M. Chateaubriand argues," said Walter, "that God would have been 'an unskilful designer' had he not created the world in this way—that there would have been neither beauty nor magnificence in his work; it would have been wanting in taste."

"False decoration," I answered, "cannot be good taste, not even in building worlds. God could no doubt have created, not only in one week, but at once and by one word, a world perfect and habitable for man, full furnished with all that his necessities required, and beautified in a manner to please his eye, and satisfy the most delicate sensibilities of man's nature; but why should we make him so poor in the resources of his wisdom that he must needs create for that purpose a vast system of fictitious ruins? This argument of the accomplished Frenchman is like a bit of gauze, exquisitely beautiful, but too delicate to bear handling. It would be sad to think that, in this instance, he represents the 'GENIUS OF CHRISTIANITY.'"



## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE SIX DAYS OF GENESIS—THEORY OF THE “LITERAL DAYS.”

“Did not your Maker make  
Out of old worlds this new one in few days?”  
*Cain.*

WE must assume it then as an established fact, that the world is exceedingly old. Thousands and hundreds of thousands will not serve to reckon up its years. It is necessary now to reconcile this conclusion of inductive science with the statements of the Bible. The first chapter of Genesis informs us that the world with its whole complement of creatures, organic and inorganic, was created in six days, and according to the chronology of the Bible that week of creation, at the longest calculation, cannot be placed farther back than 7,000 years from the present time. Are we not right? If so, there is a plain contradiction between the two records, the record of nature, and the record of revelation. What shall we say? Must the Christian world give up its faith, or shall it abandon all confidence in the conclusions of science?

The Christian world is not like to do either. In the first place, we are not aware of any competent tribunal which has ever settled the true chronology of the Bible, or decided how long, according to Genesis, the Almighty was occupied in creating the world. Protestants do not acknowledge any authority as competent to do so, and that

living oracle to whose decisions the Catholic believer bows has never pronounced, nor is accustomed to pronounce in matters of this kind, where no mystery of religion, nor moral doctrine is involved. How old the world was when Adam appeared upon the scene, and how much older she has grown to be since, have always been disputed questions in the Christian world, and are open questions yet. Under such circumstances, the geologist and the astronomer who see no contradiction between their Bible and their interpretation of the book of nature can hold consistently to both, and, whether right or wrong in their opinions, it is great arrogance to fix the title of infidel upon them. Besides this, they do not stand alone. A great number of the foremost men in theological learning, and sincere piety, are as firmly convinced of the great antiquity of the world as they.

There is, nevertheless, some appearance of conflict between the two records, and it is important to know how to reconcile them.

We cannot promise to clear away every obscurity from the subject. The first chapter of Genesis was always a perplexing study, as may be seen by such of the Fathers as have written upon it expressly, or by consulting any voluminous commentary. "What sort of days those were," writes St. Augustine, referring to the six days of Genesis, "is very difficult if not impossible even to think, much more to say. For we see that these days we know of now have no other evening than that occasioned by the sunset, nor morning except that brought in by the sunrise; of those other days, however, the first three were accomplished without the sun, which is said to have been made on the fourth day."<sup>1</sup> What his own theory of interpretation was we shall see hereafter. I must confess, I have

<sup>1</sup> De Civit. Dei, l. xi, c. 6, 7.

little confidence in the candor of any intelligent man who finds no difficulty in the subject. The Book of Genesis is a very ancient one, the oldest in existence, and much of its contents, perhaps, far older than Moses ; for although as a volume, we have it undoubtedly from that prophet, yet it is very probable that he compiled it in part from the scattered fragments of earlier history, and that written history too, as many scholars conclude from internal evidences in the Hebrew text. The explication of this ancient record is little if any aided by concomitant traditions, and it is not to be wondered at if much obscurity has settled upon its meaning. The general scope and religious bearing of the first chapter is clear enough—we have it all in the first article of the Apostles’ Creed—but some of the words and phrases here, as elsewhere in the same book, are not so easily interpreted. In history, as in a landscape, the nearest objects are in boldest relief, for time like distance has its shadows in the background. At all events, account for it as we may, it is no easy matter to expound in detail the Mosaic narrative of the creation, and those who do it the most confidently are by no means the most learned, nor the most clear-headed. It is a remarkable fact that when mechanics, merchants, lawyers, soldiers and sailors undertake to comment on the sacred text, they find less difficulty than theologians.

“ On the same principle, perhaps,” interposed Walter, “ that young dogs, although the first to lose the scent, are the last to be seen at fault. Their noses are always fresh, if the scent is not.”

In attempting to harmonize the Mosaic account of creation with geology, we are not bound to clear away every obscurity. In this life at least, all truths, like natural objects, stand in relief and shade. We are not bound to demonstrate *positively* that there is no conflict

between the two. The burden of proof is not on our side. All we are bound to do is to show that the supposed points of contradiction are not necessarily such. The positive proofs of the truth of our record have been given already, and it is in possession of its good character.

Now, there are several methods proposed of interpreting the "Days" of Genesis, each one of which, as its friends contend, will remove all appearance of conflict between the sacred text and natural science. We will give some of these in succession. We have our own theory; but it would be presumption to discard, without notice, others which are sustained by men of high intelligence, and with a full knowledge of all the difficulties.

The first theory supposes the word *day* to signify a literal day of twenty-four hours. The present creation, or the habitable globe as we see it now, with all its existing forms of life, its animals and plants, was commenced and finished within the space of six such natural days. Nevertheless, the matter of the earth, and of the stars, was not created at this time, but at some earlier period lying far remote in the abyss of the past. The opening verse of Genesis—"In the beginning God created heaven and earth"—is referred, of course, to this first creation of the matter of the universe. The second verse commences a detailed account of the *present creation*, thus passing over in silence a vast period of time, during which occurred those many changes in the configuration of the earth's surface, that frequent interchange of place between land and water, those successive formations of new rocks out of the ruins of the old, and all those creations of animals and plants now found in the fossil state.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> St. Augustine has been incorrectly cited for the opinion that matter was first created, and that afterward an indefinite interval elapsed until the six days of Genesis; for he says:

"That matter, out of which are derived all those things which are

This theory seems fair enough, if the sacred text will bear it. It could not be necessary for the Prophet to take notice of those vanished creations represented by the fossils. They were as unthought of and undreamed of in his day, as the volcanoes in the moon, or the rings of Saturn. But there are other difficulties in the theory. A natural, literal day is produced by a revolution of the earth on its axis beneath the rays of the sun. The creation of the sun, moon, and stars is assigned by Genesis to the fourth day. By what measure of time, then, were the first three days computed?

To this it might be replied that a more just interpretation of the language of the Prophet shows his meaning to be, not that the heavenly bodies were created on the fourth day, but that they were then first appointed to serve their present offices.<sup>1</sup>

But, it may again be objected, we are told in Genesis

distinct and formed, was made at first in a confused and unformed state, which I think the Greeks call *chaos*. And thus in another place we read what is said to the praise of God: *qui fecisti mundum de materia informi*, which some copies have *de materia invisâ*. And therefore God is rightly believed to have made all things from nothing, because, although all things having form were made of that matter, that matter itself was made out of absolute nothing."—De Genesi. Contra Manich., lib. i, cap. vi.

There is, nevertheless, nothing here that indicates any such indefinite interval of ages. Besides, it is certain that St. Augustine had no thought of any interval of time between the first creation of matter, and the organization of the world, his theory being a very different one, as we shall afterward see. In his Confessions, after repeating the same thing as above, he explains his meaning to be that the matter of the universe was prior to the organized world, as sound is prior to music, *non in tempore, sed in origine*.—Conf., lib. xii, cap. 29.

<sup>1</sup> Hitchcock's Geol. p. 351. Such was the explanation of St. Thomas. "Dicendum quod prima die facta est natura lucis in aliquo subjecto. Sed quarta die facta sunt luminaria; non quia eorum substantia sit de novo producta, sed quia sunt in aliquo modo formata quo prius non erant." (Summa I, Q. 74, art. i ad 4.)

that the light was created on the first day. Was the earth then in darkness during the long ages that went before? And again, the formation of the earth and sea, by the gathering together of the waters, took place on the third day. The existing continents and oceans must therefore have been made or ordered at that time and on that day, and, as the second and ninth verses of the chapter show, a state of things existed before that day which was so far chaotic that land and water were devoid of life, and mingled together in some sort of confusion. Is this chaotic confusion at all reconcilable with the existence of those numerous and various creatures which once occupied the earth and ocean, and are represented now by their fossil remains?

The theory we are considering does not suppose a constant state of chaos from the creation of matter up to the commencement of the present creation, or that described by Moses. It supposes a succession of destructions and renovations of life, elevations and submergences of continents and islands, terminating with that last chaos and that final re-creation of which we read in Genesis. Neither was that chaos an absolute state of confusion, but only one of partial disorder both on earth and in the air, during which the sun was obscured by a dense chaotic atmosphere.<sup>1</sup> The land and ocean were afterward assigned to

<sup>1</sup> This idea of the sun existing prior to the fourth day in a state of obscuration was held by St. Basil, St. Cæsarius, and Origen, as cited by Cardinal Wiseman in his *Lectures on the Connection between Science and Revealed Religion*. "They account for the creation of light prior to that of the sun, by supposing this luminary to have indeed before existed, yet so as that its rays were prevented by the dense chaotic atmosphere from penetrating to the earth; this was on the first day, so far rarefied as to allow the transmission of the sun's rays, though not the discernment of its disk, which was fully displayed on the third (4th) day." (Lect. v.)

With regard to the sentiments of the other Fathers named, I cannot

their present positions on the *third day*, and on the *fourth* the atmosphere was rarefied and rendered transparent, and the sun's rays penetrated again to the earth. The theory is given by Cardinal Wiseman in its most attractive form, as follows :

"Had the Scripture allowed no interval between creation and organization, but declared that they were simultaneous, or closely consecutive acts, we should perhaps have stood perplexed in the reconciliation between its assertions and modern discoveries. But when, instead of this, it leaves an undecided interval between the two, nay more, informs us that there was a state of confusion and conflict, of waste and darkness, and a want of a proper basin for the sea, which thus would cover first one part of the earth, and then another ; we may truly say that the geologist reads in those few lines the history of the earth, such as his monuments have recorded it,—a series of disruptions, elevations, and dislocations ; sudden inroads of the unchained element, entombing successive generations of amphibious animals ; calm, but unexpected subsidences of the waters, embalming in their various beds their myriads of aquatic inhabitants ; alternations of sea and land,

speak, not having had opportunity to examine ; but St. Basil is certainly cited incorrectly. His theory is very different. He considered that there was a light of some kind before the creation of the world. "*Arbitramur sanè, si quid erat ante mundi sensibilis atque corrupti constitutionem, id in lumine nimirum fuisse.*" That light, however, was nothing less than the supercelestial light, which is promised to the just in heaven, and the privation of which will constitute the "exterior darkness" of the damned. When the globe of the heavens was created, that which it embraced in its hollow interior was shut up from this external light, and remained in darkness. Then afterward by his "*fiat lux*," God created light such as we have in this world, not the sun, but the light itself : "*Prima vox Dei lucis naturam creavit.*" (Hexæmeron. Hom. ii.) Afterward again, on the 4th day, he created the sun : "*Nunc autem hoc solis corpus exstructum est, ut illi primogenitæ luci vehiculum esset.*" (Hexæmeron. Hom. vi, Lat. transl. in Migne's ed.)

and fresh-water lakes ; an atmosphere obscured by dense carbonic vapor, which by gradual absorption in the waters, was cleared away, and produced the pervading mass of calcareous formations ; till at length came the last revolution preparatory for our creation, when the earth, being now sufficiently broken for that beautiful diversity which God now intended to bestow on it, or to produce those landmarks and barriers which his foreseeing counsels had designed, the work of ruin was suspended, save for one more great scourge ; and the earth remained in that state of sullen and gloomy prostration, from which it was recalled by the reproduction of light, and the subsequent work of the six days' creation."<sup>1</sup>

No very serious difficulties occur in the sacred text to militate against this theory ; but, unfortunately for it, the progress of scientific discovery has made it altogether untenable, except under very important modifications which destroy all its simplicity. Its advocates have taken it for granted, that all the existing species of animals and plants date their origin from a common starting point, the epoch of man's creation, all the earlier forms of life having been cut off by the chaotic period which immediately preceded our own. This assumption is now known to be unfounded. The present creation is not cut off abruptly from a preceding one ; that chaos which was conveniently located between the two never existed, and indeed the whole Braminical theory, once so popular among geologists, of general revolutions in nature, "of creations and destructions of worlds innumerable," has of late years grown into great disrepute.

"It is a great fact," says Mr. Hugh Miller, "now fully established in the course of geological discovery, that between the plants which in the present time cover the earth,

<sup>1</sup> Lect. v, p. 294. On the Connection, &c.



and the animals which inhabit it, and the animals and plants of the later extinct creations, there occurred no break or blank, but that, on the contrary, many of the existing organisms were contemporary, during the morning of their being, with many of the extinct ones during the evening of theirs."<sup>1</sup>

The testimony of Sir Charles Lyell was given long ago to the same effect. "In going back from the recent to the Eocene period, we are carried by many successive steps from the fauna now contemporary with man to an assemblage of fossil species wholly different from those now living. In the retrospect we have not yet succeeded in tracing back a perfect transition from the recent to an extinct fauna; but there are usually so many species in common to the groups which stand next in succession, as to show that there is no great chasm, no signs of a crisis when one class of organic beings was annihilated to give place suddenly to another. This analogy, therefore, derived from a period of the earth's history which can best be compared with the present state of things, and more thoroughly investigated than any other, leads to the conclusion that the extinction and creation of species has been, and is the result of a slow and gradual change in the organic world."<sup>2</sup>

A calculation of the antiquity of the delta of the Mississippi river, made by the same author, shows to how remote a period in the past must be assigned the creation of some species of creatures now existing. The calculation, of course, was not intended to be a full and satisfactory answer to the inquiry, but only an approximation to the minimum of time required for the river to deposit the mass of alluvial matter which constitutes this delta. The

<sup>1</sup> Test. of the Rocks, lect. iii, p. 147.

<sup>2</sup> Princ. of Geol., ch. xiii, p. 185.

basis of this calculation was found by experiments made to ascertain the proportion of sediment contained in the waters of the river, and the mean annual discharge of that water at a given point, which would give the average yearly deposition below. The amount of this annual deposition was then compared with the gross amount of matter in the delta, computed from the extent of its area, and the average depth of its alluvium. The author concludes his calculation in these words: "However vast the time during which the Mississippi has been transporting its earthy burden to the ocean, the whole period, though far exceeding, perhaps, 100,000 years, must be insignificant in a geological point of view, since the bluffs, or cliffs, bounding the great valley, and therefore older in date, and which are from 50 to 250 feet in perpendicular height, consist in great part of loam containing land, fluvial, and lacustrine shells *of species still inhabiting the same country.*"<sup>1</sup> No trace of man, however, can be found in deposits so old as the bluffs which contain these shells. We are contemporary with creatures of the same sort, but do not date our pedigree so far back. The conclusion, therefore, is clearly against our present theory of "literal days." The earth was not in a chaotic state so soon before the creation of Adam, and the creatures which now inhabit it were not ushered into existence within the compass of a literal week.

In truth, we are glad enough to believe it. We are not sorry to be driven to some better scheme of reconciliation. This idea of sweeping destructions, and re-creations, of building the world over and over again to knock it down as often, consorts better by far with the Hindoo Brama than with the God of our fathers. It is said of the true God in Holy Writ: "*Attingit a fine usque ad finem*

<sup>1</sup> Principles of Geol., ch. xviii, p. 274.

*fortiter ; disponit omnia suaviter.*”<sup>1</sup> If the theory of the Pre-Adamites were true; if the world before Adam had been inhabited by moral and responsible beings, and these had sinned, it would be less strange. Then, indeed, we might easily conceive why they should have been swept away from the world they had polluted, with all the suddenness of a judgment,

“ By a most crushing and inexorable  
Destruction and disorder of the elements,  
Which struck a world to chaos, as a chaos  
Subsiding has struck out a world : such things,  
Though rare in time, are frequent in eternity.”<sup>2</sup>

But the Sacred Scriptures tell us of no such catastrophes in the history of our world—neither does geology. In this connection it will be useful to continue the quotation last made from Sir Charles Lyell.

“ Before we take leave of the great delta, we may derive an instructive lesson from the reflection that the new deposits already formed, or now accumulating, whether marine or fresh-water, must greatly resemble in composition, and the general character of their organic remains, many ancient strata which enter largely into the earth’s structure. Yet there is no sudden revolution in progress, whether on the land or in the waters, whether in the animate or the inanimate world. Notwithstanding the excessive destruction of soil and uprooting of trees, the region which yields a never-failing supply of driftwood is densely clothed with noble forests, and is almost unrivalled in its power of supporting animal and vegetable life. In spite of the undermining of many a lofty bluff, and the encroachment of the delta on the sea—in spite of the earthquake which rends and fissures the soil, or causes areas more than sixty miles in length to sink down several yards

<sup>1</sup> Sap. viii, 1.

<sup>2</sup> Byron’s Cain.

in a few months, the general features of the district remain unaltered, or are merely undergoing a slow and insensible change. Herds of wild deer graze on the pastures, or browse upon the trees; and if they diminish in number, it is only where they give way to man, and the domestic animals which follow in his train. The bear, the wolf, the fox, the panther, and the wildcat, still maintain themselves in the fastnesses of the forests of cypress and gum tree. The raccoon and the opossum are everywhere abundant, while the muskrat, otter, and mink still frequent the rivers and lakes, and a few beavers and buffaloes have not yet been driven from their ancient haunts. The waters teem with alligators, tortoises, and fish, and their surface is covered with millions of migratory waterfowl, which perform their annual voyage between the Canadian lakes and the shores of the Mexican Gulf. The power of man begins to be sensibly felt, and many parts of the wilderness to be replaced by towns, orchards, and gardens. The gilded steamboats, like moving palaces, stem the force of the current, or shoot rapidly down the descending stream, through the solitudes of the forests and prairies. Already does the flourishing population of the great valley far exceed that of the thirteen United States when first they declared their independence. Such is the state of a continent, where trees and stones are hurried annually, by a thousand torrents, from the mountains to the plains, and where sand and finer matter are swept down by a vast current to the sea, together with the wreck of countless forests, and the bones of animals which perish in the inundations. When these materials reach the gulf, they do not render the waters unfit for aquatic animals; but, on the contrary, the ocean here swarms with life, as it generally does where the influx of a great river furnishes a copious supply of organic

and mineral matter. Yet many geologists, when they behold the spoils of the land heaped in successive strata, and blended confusedly with the remains of fishes, or interspersed with broken shells and corals; when they see portions of erect trunks of trees with their roots still retaining their natural position, and one tier of these preserved in a fossil state above another, imagine that they are viewing the signs of a turbulent instead of a tranquil state of the planet. They read in such phenomena the proof of chaotic disorder, and reiterated catastrophes, instead of indications of a surface as habitable as the most delicious and fertile districts now tenanted by man."

The principles thus beautifully advocated, of a slow and uniform action of nature in remote as well as modern epochs of the earth's history, were received at first with great hesitation even by geologists, and it is therefore no wonder that others, not scientific men, should go on, even after the publication of Lyell's great work, to frame theories of connection between Genesis and geology based on the old ideas. But now, to the vast eruptions, fires, and floods of earlier theories, calmer views have succeeded in the circles of science,<sup>1</sup> which ought to lead to some more sober way of explaining its relations with sacred literature.

A reformed theory of "literal days" has been put forth by the late Dr. Smith, a learned divine of England, and one well conversant with geology. His modification

<sup>1</sup> Among other steps in this direction, a more gentle and uniform principle has been advanced by the distinguished American paleontologist Mr. James Hall, to account for the origin of mountain chains, based chiefly upon his own investigations of the Alleghany ranges. They are attributed by him to the slow action of ancient currents in the ocean, instead of the violent struggles of imprisoned fire. (Proceedings of the Albany Institute, reported in the "Albany Evening Journal," April 27, 1860.)

consists in supposing that the six days' work described by Moses was a local, and not a universal creation, the chaotic period of darkness and death being also limited to a particular region of the earth coextensive with the new creation. This region of the earth he conceives to have been "a part of Asia, lying between the Caucasian ridge, the Caspian Sea, and Tartary on the north, the Persian and Indian seas on the south, and the high mountain ridges which run at considerable distances on the eastern and western flank. I venture to think," he says, "that man as first created, and for many ages afterward, did not extend his race beyond these limits, and therefore had no connection with the extreme east, the Indian and Pacific clusters of islands, Africa, Europe, and America; in which regions we have ocular demonstrations that animal and vegetable creatures had existed, to a vast amount, uninterruptedly, through periods past of indescribable duration. This region was first, by atmospheric and geological causes of previous operation under the will of the Almighty, brought into a condition of superficial ruin, or some kind of general disorder. With reverence I propose the supposition that this state was produced by the subsidence of the region, of which the immediate cause might be the same that we know has often wrought a similar effect in various districts upon the earth's surface; namely, that which is probably the cause of earthquakes, a movement (which may be in the degrees of intensity) of the igneous fluid mass below. Extreme darkness has been often known to accompany such phenomena. This is the unforced meaning of the two words rendered 'without form and void.' Those words (*tohu vabohu*) are elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible used to describe ruined cities, wild wastes of desert land, and figuratively anything that is *empty, unsubstantial, or useless.*

“The sacred record presents to us the district described as overflowed with water, and its atmosphere so turbid that extreme gloominess prevailed. ‘Darkness was upon the face of the deep’—the ‘waters’ mentioned just before. Both this deluge, from the flowing in of a sea or rivers, and the darkness would be the effect of an extensive subsidence. The Hebrew word does not mean necessarily the absolute privation of light : it is used in relation to various circumstances of partial darkness ; and we know that conditions of the atmosphere have locally happened, in ancient and in recent times, in which the noonday has become dark as an ordinary night. The divine power acted through the laws of gravity and molecular attraction ; and, where requisite, in an immediate, extraordinary, or miraculous manner. The atmosphere over the region became so far cleared as to be pervious to light, though not yet perfectly transparent. In this process the watery vapor collected into floating masses—the clouds ; which, as we have seen, the ancient Hebrews expressed by the phrase ‘waters above the firmament.’ Elevations of land took place, by upheaving igneous force ; and consequently the waters flowed into the lower parts, producing lakes, and probably the Caspian Sea, which manifestly belonged to the very region. The elevated land was now clothed with vegetation instantly created. By the fourth day the atmosphere over this district had become pellucid ; and had there been a human eye to behold, the brightness of the sun would have been seen, and the other heavenly bodies after the sun was set. Animals were produced by immediate creation, in this succession ; the inhabitants of the waters, birds, and land animals ; all in the full vigor of their natures. No mention is made of the thousands of tribes of insects, molluscous creatures, and animalcules, whose number, we know, transcends calculation. It is generally assumed by com-

mentators that they are included in "the things that creep." But this very phrase supplies an illustration of the Scripture style, as condescending to the limited knowledge and the simple associations of comparatively uncultivated men. Last of all, God formed his noblest earthly creature: "In the image of God created He him," in the command of physical faculties, the possession of intellect, a dominion over the lower creation, and the noblest enjoyment of all, the image of the divine holiness."<sup>1</sup>

It is said in the second verse of Genesis, "*and the earth was void and empty*;" the question therefore occurs—must not this be understood to mean the whole globe of the earth?

Dr. Smith explains himself in this particular: "The most general sense of the word (Earth), is that portion of the universe which the Supreme Lord has assigned for the habitation of mankind. When it is conjoined with 'the heavens,' it denotes the entire created world; but it is evident of itself, that the practical understanding of the phrase would be in conformity with the ideas of the people who used it. Frequently it stands for the land of Palestine, and indeed for any country or district that is mentioned or referred to in the connection. Sometimes it denotes a mere plot of ground, and sometimes the soil, clay, and sand, or any earthy matter. Often it is put figuratively, for mankind, as the inhabitants of the world. Considering all the evidence of the case, I can find no reason against our regarding the word, subsequently to the first verse, and throughout the whole description of the six days, as designed to express *the part of our world which God was adapting for the dwelling of man, and the animals connected with him.* Of the spheroidal figure of

<sup>1</sup> Scripture and Geology, by John Pye Smith. Lect. vii, part ii, p. 250; 5th London ed.



the earth, it is evident that the Hebrews had not the most distant conception.”

His understanding of the first of Genesis in its religious bearings, is given by Dr. Smith as follows: “I must profess my conviction, that we are not obliged by the terms made use of, to extend the narrative of the six days to a wider application than this: *a description, in expressions adapted to the ideas and capacities of mankind in the earliest ages, of a series of operations, by which the Being of omnipotent wisdom and goodness adjusted and furnished the earth generally, but, as the particular subject of consideration here, a PORTION of its surface, for most glorious purposes; in which a newly formed creature should be the object of those manifestations of the authority and grace of the Most High, which shall to eternity show forth his perfections above all other methods of their display.*”<sup>1</sup>

We have no desire to quarrel with this theory of Dr. Smith’s upon any point of mere verbal construction. The text might support it, taken by piecemeal, but the entire chapter sinks under it. It is stripped of its dignity, its sublimity, and its theological force. Viewed as a standard of true doctrine raised by the Hebrew Church against the prevalent idolatry of those times, it becomes thus a very feeble one. The Prophet might naturally enough pass over those ages represented by the fossil world, without any express notice, so long as they were not excluded, for the reason that they were unknown and undreamed of, and belonged to a vanished state of things. But that while classifying the creatures of a locality, he should pass over in silence, and even exclude from his description the greatest part of the actual earth, whose broad breast was teaming the while with living creatures, the actual objects too of idolatrous worship, is an hypothesis scarcely ad-

<sup>1</sup> Scripture and Geology, by John Pye Smith. Lect. vii.

missible. The Hebrews were but just come from Egypt at the time he wrote, if come at all—an idolatrous country not included in that portion of Central Asia marked out by Dr. Smith. The country to which they migrated is also not included, an idolatrous country again. Surely, there was more danger of their worshipping the creature forms of Palestine and Egypt than those of Central Asia, and therefore these needed quite as much to be classified among the helpless works of the divine hand. Every way, it seems to me, in point of religious doctrine and moral significance, the chapter is almost destroyed by this theory. The idea of a local or sectional creation is as meagre in its religious bearings, as that of a local or sectional redemption. The whole Hebrew and Christian doctrine of the creation, consists in this, that one God created *all* things. According to this interpretation, one single verse alone of Genesis contains this, and yet none too clearly. The rest of the chapter is taken up with showing in detail that God created Tartary, and the surrounding levels, with their peculiar fauna and flora. In the study of the Scriptures it is good to be liberal where no certainty exists, but first of all let us save the great doctrines. Dr. Smith, no doubt, believed in the creation in its true and full sense, but the light he had on this subject, was preserved and transmitted to him, I ween, by a nobler and broader view of the first of Genesis, than he has since adopted.

“I see,” said Walter, “that you are no patron of the ‘literal days.’ But let me suppose a case. Some good Christian, or honest inquirer, who understands the question perfectly on the scientific side, reading the first chapter of Genesis, cannot divest himself of the literal sense. It seems evident to him that the author himself when writing must have so understood the words he used. Does this put him in conflict with the Old Testament as a

record of divine revelation? Is he logically bound to reject its authority?”

“No, my boy, by no means. That would be the very climax of folly. Because he finds a difficulty which he cannot solve in one chapter of the Bible, and that one of the oldest and obscurest of the whole, must he throw away the entire revelation, interwoven as it is with the whole history of the Hebrew Church and nation, supported as we have seen by a flood of evidence, sealed by most public and manifest miracles and prophecies, corroborated by all the independent evidences of Christianity, and believed for so many centuries and in our own age by all the civilized nations of the world? Do reasonable men act in that way?”

“But,” persisted Walter, “it would be painful and perplexing to admit such an apparent contradiction in what he holds to be an inspired record, and without the least power to indicate any method of reconciliation.”

“I do not see any such helplessness in the case. We have already agreed that it is not necessary to the idea of inspiration to suppose the sacred writers safeguarded against mistakes of judgment or of fact, except where religious truth is involved. It would not, therefore, be fatal to the divine authority of the Bible to suppose some error of such a nature in this instance. The author of Genesis might have received the idea of a creation in six days from some current tradition of his day, which he had no light to reject. That the days of creation were stages of progression is an idea very easily suggested. It is hard even nowadays to keep naturalists from reading such a philosophy in the rocks, although the facts are plainly against them. The works of these days of creation would then very naturally arrange themselves according to the relative dignity of creatures in the scale of being, estimated by the simple science of the times.

“It must not be forgotten, moreover, that in Scripture the literal sense does not exclude a spiritual one. For instance: the Psalms of David abound in prophetic passages of deep symbolical and spiritual meaning, and yet a literal application to David and the Hebrew people runs throughout them all. To the Fathers, St. Basil and St. Augustine in particular, the chaos, the light, the days, the evenings and mornings, and almost every word mentioned in this chapter, were suggestive of religious mysteries; and although we may not choose to follow them closely in this, yet the grand religious doctrine of a divine Creator stands out in full relief; and whatever erroneous notions of cosmogony may have existed in the Prophet’s mind, that doctrine is unimpeachable.

“An instance occurs, in the second chapter of St. John’s Gospel, where the literal and spiritual sense occur in the same words, and the words in the literal sense are not even true; yet no one now takes scandal at this, because the spiritual sense is the only one of any importance. After our Lord had driven the money changers out of the temple, the Jews asked for some miracle to prove his authority. He answered: ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’ The Jews understood him in the literal sense only, and said: ‘Six and forty years was this temple in building, and wilt thou raise it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body.’ Our Lord did not explain himself, and it was only after his resurrection that he was properly understood. ‘When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had said.’ Ought we not to be satisfied as well as these disciples, or must we insist that the word of Jesus Christ is no more to be relied on, because the temple of Jerusalem was not literally raised up again three days after the Romans burnt it down?

“Lord Bacon has often been accused of introducing materialism into philosophy, and yet some of his accusers might take lessons of him in the interpreting of Scripture. ‘A just and sound difference,’ he says, ‘is to be made between the manner of the exposition of the Scriptures and all other books. For it is an excellect observation which hath been made upon the answers of our Saviour Christ to many of the questions which were propounded to him, how that they are impertinent to the state of the question demanded; the reason whereof is, because not being like man which knows man’s thoughts by his words, but knowing man’s thoughts immediately, he never answered their words but their thoughts. Much in the like manner it is with the Scriptures which, being written to the thoughts of men, and to the succession of all ages, with a foresight of all heresies, contradictions, differing estates of the church, yea, and particularly of the elect, are not to be interpreted only according to the latitude of the proper sense of the place, and respectively toward that present occasion whereupon the words were uttered, or in precise congruity or contexture with the words before or after, or in contemplation of the principal scope of the place; but have in themselves, not only totally or collectively, but distributively in clauses and words, infinite springs and streams of doctrine to water the church in every part. And therefore as the literal sense is, as it were, the main stream or river, so the moral sense chiefly, and sometimes the allegorical or typical, are they whereof the church hath most use. Not that I wish men to be bold in allegories or light in allusions; but that I do much condemn that interpretation of Scripture which is only after the manner as men use to interpret a profane book.’”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On the Advancement of Learning, b. ii.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE SIX DAYS OF GENESIS, CONTINUED—THEORY OF THE “DAYS OF AGES.”

“I said: When first the world began  
Young Nature through five cycles ran,  
And in the sixth she moulded man.”

TENNYSON.

IF we do not accept the six days of Genesis for literal days of twenty-four hours each, in what other sense may we understand them?

Some consider them to represent vast periods of indefinite and probably very unequal length. The word Day is sometimes employed for an indefinite period. The fourth verse of the second chapter of Genesis affords an example: “These are the generations of the heavens and the earth, when they were created, in the *day* that the Lord God made the heavens and the earth.” We have, moreover, the familiar expression of *a man’s day* to signify either the period of his youth and strength, or the whole epoch of his lifetime. St. Augustine argues against the literal understanding of the word in the week of creation, from the fact that the first three days had no sun or moon, by means of which our ordinary days are measured. The literal sense is therefore not imperative, and if geology furnishes urgent reasons against it, we are free to abandon it. If, moreover, these days are still admitted as measures of time, why may they not stand for periods long enough

to answer all the requirements of science? Why may they not be “days of ages?”

The theory is simple enough thus far; but the next step brings us into difficulty. The six days of the Mosaic record, if they represent time at all, were stations of progress in the work of creation. The light, sky, earth, and ocean having first been created and ordered, on the third day the vegetation appeared, on the fourth the sun, moon, and stars, on the fifth the fish and fowl were created, and on the sixth the animals of the land, concluding with man himself. Now, if this present theory be true, the petrifications imbedded in the rocks should show the like progress. The fossil flora, created on the third day, should be found first or deepest, the remains of marine animals coming in next and above, and these again followed by animals of the land. Is this correspondence found to exist between the Mosaic record and the record of the rocks?

Now, sooth to say, it is not; although time was when it did seem so. So far as geological researches have yet gone, the remains of animal life are found in the earliest fossiliferous formations, and yield nothing in point of antiquity to the vegetable world. In Genesis animal life is not produced until the fifth day; the “green herb and the fruit tree” were created on the third. Other points of discrepancy are not wanting.

This very nearly demolishes the theory so far as it depends upon geology for *positive* proofs in its favor. It must be confessed, nevertheless, that it is not in clear contradiction with that science, and is therefore still tenable, as the following explanation will show.

The science of geology, albeit well advanced, is not yet by any means perfected, nor its resources exhausted. It does not positively tell us yet when organized life first began upon the earth, nor in what order. The earliest

formation in which fossils have been found is known, but who knows that life began then and there? More ancient fossils may still be found, and even if none older exist, they may have existed and been obliterated. There is a class of rocks called metamorphic, which carry evidence of having been originally deposited by the action of water, and subsequently transformed by fire or heat. Those which immediately underlie the oldest fossiliferous formations are of this character. Who can say then that fossils may not once have existed in them before their metamorphosis, and been afterward destroyed by the new arrangement of particles in crystallization? In truth, fossil forms partially obliterated have been found in rocks imperfectly altered; granite itself is now believed to have been originally a sedimentary formation; who then is able to assert that all the great primitive rocks, so called, may not have contained fossils at some early period, which, together with the marks of stratification, have been obliterated by metamorphosis? The earth is perhaps older and has been stocked much longer than even geologists imagine. Add to this the fact that the land occupies only about one fourth of the earth's surface, the rest being water. The researches of geologists are in consequence confined to this small portion of the globe, with the exception of certain superficial observations of the sea bottom in the shallower parts.

We object, therefore, to the urging of premature theories, however probable they may be, as certain principles of science, and compelling the interpreters of Scripture to bow down to them. The circumstances which have governed the formation of strata, and the grouping of fossil remains in remote epochs, are not so perfectly determined that we may safely proceed to generalize, constructing cosmogonies out of local ruins, and repeopling the whole



earth out of the bones of a few graveyards. Science has never yet put her finger with certainty upon the birth-place of a single type of life ; and she is hardly yet in a position to decide what the actual succession of organic creatures has been over the entire globe.<sup>1</sup> We confess to some doubt even (without hazarding an opinion) whether, the entire globe considered, there has been any succession of types. Old types have sometimes become extinct, but the coming in of new is not so clearly proved. The whole argument of Sir Charles Lyell against a progressive development of organic life at successive geological periods, is equally applicable to all theories of successive creations (or transmutations) of species. “Times so enormous,” he urges, “as that contemplated by the geologist, may multiply exceptional cases till they seem to constitute the rule, and so impose on the imagination as to lead us to infer the non-existence of creatures of which no monuments happen to remain. Professor Forbes has remarked, that few geologists are aware how large a proportion of all known species of fossils are founded on single specimens, while a still greater number are founded on a few individuals discovered in one spot. This holds true not only in regard to animals and plants inhabiting the land, the lake, and the river, but even to a surprising number of the marine mollusca, articulata, and radiata. *Our knowledge, therefore, of the living creation of any given period of the past may be said to depend in a great degree on what we commonly*

<sup>1</sup> The truthfulness of our palæontological tables as comprehensive representations of animated nature at the several epochs, is in honest dispute. The fossil beds everywhere succeed each other in the same order, we are told ; but may not this indicate simply the order in which organic life has been introduced *from abroad* into our present continents, and to the vicinity of their shores while in the process of formation and development? Such an introduction should be guided by natural laws, and with a certain degree of uniformity.

*call chance ; and the casual discovery of some new localities rich in peculiar fossils may modify, or entirely overthrow all our previous generalizations."*<sup>1</sup>

We do not see, therefore, that this theory of age-long days has become in its main principle untenable, although it is impossible to carry out any *positive* parallel between the six days of Genesis and any supposable divisions of geological time, founded on the actual classifications of that science. For this reason, probably, little favor has been shown it of late either by naturalists or divines. It has nevertheless been adopted recently, in a modified form, by an accomplished geologist of Scotland, the late Hugh Miller.

Mr. Miller supposes that the great Hebrew Prophet must have received his revelations of the world's genesis in a vision. In this vision the works of creation were presented to his eye in six stages of their progress, like the successive scenes of a drama, or the moving tableaux of a diorama. These are the six days of Genesis. The Prophet, moreover, in reducing to writing the scenes of this vision, did not record the details, as would a naturalist, according to any order of classification, but, like an unscientific albeit intelligent observer, noted down the most prominent and striking objects which met his view. His eye marked and retained only the grand and striking characteristics of each shifting scene. He remembered and noted down each class of creatures in that order of time in which, by its great predominance upon the scene, it engrossed his own attention. He assigns therefore the grass and plants to that stage only of the vision—to that day—when an abundant and vigorous vegetation ruled the earth ; the sun and moon to that in which they were made to shine out through the rarefied atmosphere with their disks unveiled, and in their full flood of glory. And so with the fish of

<sup>1</sup> Princ. of Geol., ch. ix, p. 146. Appleton's ed. of 1857.

the seas, the birds of the air, the reptiles and great beasts of the land—each class finds its place at that point, not where it was first created, but where it predominated and ruled upon the scene. According to such an order, Mr. Miller claims, the two records agree perfectly. "I am greatly mistaken," he concludes, after a glowing comparison upon these principles, "if we have not in the six geologic periods all the elements, without misplacement or exaggeration, of the Mosaic drama of creation."<sup>1</sup>

We, for our part, see no fatal objection to the general principle of interpretation which Mr. Miller applies to the first of Genesis. A revelation to Moses could have been made by vision, although we see no indications of this in the record. If, moreover, that vision embraced vast periods of time, it would doubtless be so foreshortened that the mass of details would be lost, its objects and events being presented in grand groupings only; but we can find little satisfaction in the particular accommodation he has made of the periods of geological science to the days of Genesis.

In the first place, we have a special objection to it on the Scriptural side. From Genesis ii, 5, 6, it appears that before the creation of the grass, plants, and trees, *it had not rained* upon the earth. The reason why the Prophet states this, is evidently to show that no *natural* cause existed which could account for the production of vegetation. The real drift of this passage is so apparent that critics give a different translation to the Hebrew from that of our ordinary versions. "The following sense," says Calmet, "may be given to the Hebrew: Behold in

<sup>1</sup> Test. of the Rocks. Lect. iv. He classifies his periods as follows: 1. The Azoic. 2. The Silurian and Devonian. 3. The Carboniferous. 4. The Permian and Triassic. 5. The Oolitic and Cretaceous. 6. The Tertiary.

what manner God created the heavens and the earth, and the plants before ever they sprang up in the earth, and the grass before it grew ; for as yet God had not made it to rain upon the earth, and no man had been created that could till it, and the earth had not yet yielded any vapor that could condense into rain and water. In place of what we have in the Vulgate, *'But a spring rose out of the earth,'* &c., the Rabbi Saadia read : *'And no vapors rose out of the earth to water the surface.'* He repeated the negation of the preceding member, thus : *'Homo non erat . . . et fons, seu vapor, (non) ascendebat.'* We find in Scripture many examples of this substitution of the negative. For example, in Ps. ix, 19, *'For the poor man shall not be forgotten to the end, the patience of the afflicted shall (not) perish for ever,'* the negation in the second clause is supposed but not expressed in the Hebrew. The same use of language is found in Ps. xliii, 19 : *'Our heart hath not turned back, and our steps have (not) turned aside from thy way.'*<sup>1</sup> The context shows that the like repetition of the negative must be supposed in the above passage from the 2d of Genesis, the whole and sole intent of which is to show that the vegetation which made its appearance on the third day, as declared in the first chapter, was a veritable creation, and not the result of any causes in nature. Now, according to Mr. Miller's hypothesis, a vegetation already existed, albeit a sluggish and inferior one, before the carboniferous era, which is his *third day* of creation, and consequently rain too or its equivalent. The entire meaning and argument of the Prophet is thus stultified. Geology tells us that it certainly rained long before the carboniferous era ; Genesis declares that before the third day it had not rained. That day, therefore, cannot correspond to the epoch of the coal measures. The

<sup>1</sup> Calmet's Comment. "sur la Genese," 1730. A Genève.

difficulty is a very serious one, if we wish to leave the inspired text any meaning at all; but it is only one of the many which may be urged against this ingenious parallel of days and epochs.

Our principal objection, however, to the theory, or rather to his application of it, has been already stated. In the present state, at least, of science, all attempted parallels of this nature must fail. At best the geological periods, so called, mark only (and that imperfectly) the natural history at different stages of formation of that portion of the earth's surface which is now dry land and open to research. From all the data we have we cannot say what types of life have been characteristic of the *whole earth*, especially in the remoter periods. For aught we know, during those long ages when the Silurian and Devonian rocks were forming, vast continents, with their surrounding seas, may have existed where now the great Southern Ocean spreads her wide waters over nearly an entire hemisphere; and these may have had their faunas of birds, beasts, and reptiles as wonderful as any the later rocks reveal, and many of them, perhaps, as familiar as any we see now. The fact that in those ages land was scant in this northern hemisphere, where now our actual continents are mostly congregated, would lead us very naturally to infer that it existed elsewhere, for we know that law of oscillation in the earth, by which the upheaval of land in one part is simultaneous with depression in another. It seems to us, therefore, useless to waste our time in parallels like those drawn by Mr. Miller. In the present state of science, the theory of the days of ages can neither be established nor demolished by a comparison with the "epochs" of geology.

While my young friend was reading the above essay,

Sister Becky sat listening in moody silence ; but when he had fairly got to the end, and laid the manuscript upon the table, she gave open utterance to her discontent.

“ Brother, I must tell you my honest opinion. I fear you are leading that young man’s mind astray. Oh, dear ! oh, dear ! A few days ago, Susy and I, by our straightforward, good, old-fashioned arguments, had almost brought him over, and now I fear you have spoilt the whole.”

“ Why, sister, I am not leading him at all. My plan is to follow the lead of his own mind.”

“ I don’t see the use of bringing those geologists, with their picks and hammers, and old felt hats and dirty boots, into religious questions. I never found any difficulties in the Bible. All I need to understand of it is as clear to me as the daylight, and so it would be to any one that would read it as I do.”

“ I don’t doubt it, dear,” I replied. “ All turns to gold in some golden hearts. I fancy, however, that if you were surrounded by a group of skeptics that asked for reasons, you would feel not a little embarrassed.”

“ Not she,” interposed Susy somewhat treacherously—(Not being, like my sister, ‘ a convert,’ but ‘ to the manner born,’ she looked upon her more aged friend as a sort of amiable goat that had straggled into the sheepfold, and could not be expected to bleat as naturally as an original lamb)—“ Not she, indeed ; if she could only get each one to accept of a Bible and a manual, she would go off contented. They would be sure to explode in the pocket, and do the business for them all.”

“ I am sure of one thing,” retorted Becky, rousing up to her own defence ; “ my notions of good sense would never lead me to think of converting a young gentleman by sewing a bless’d medal in the lining of his coat.”

"You hateful thing!" cried Susy, in a glow of confusion; "it isn't so."

"Well, Walter," I said, "you see these ladies have taken you out of my hands, and I will not be responsible for you. But beware of the sappers and miners! If you don't find that medal and put it away, your case will soon be hopeless."

"Not I, uncle," returned Walter gallantly, if not devoutly; "I only wish I knew which coat it is in; I would defend that precious medal with my life." His reward came quick in a glance that shot like a warm sunbeam from Susy's eyes. The eyes, however, were soon called to order by the owner.

"You are a goose."

"I do not precisely understand the intrinsic value of these things," he continued, with an arch look sideways that called forth an indignant stamp from a pretty little foot; "but at the same time I see something coupled with them that is very precious. I see warm hearts and gentle thoughts and kind wishes, and I am almost spiritual enough to fancy that they may have certain winged little things like prayers nestling on them. They may not do me any good; but I am not pig-headed, and I shall not let them do me any harm."

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE SIX DAYS OF GENESIS, CONTINUED — THEORY OF SYMBOLICAL DAYS.

“Hearken! Hearken!  
If thou would'st know the mystic song  
Chanted when the sphere was young—  
To the open ear it sings  
The early genesis of things—  
Oh, listen to the undersong!

EMERSON.

THE theories of interpretation we have already considered, regard the “days” of Genesis as periods of time, really successive to each other, and in the precise order designated in that book. It is possible, however, to take a third view, which not only gives a figurative sense to these days, but regards the whole first chapter in quite another light, as being rather a theological than a historical account of creation, and not given in the sense of a literal narrative of events in their exact order of succession?

Now, some pious reader may ask: Is it allowable to take so liberal a view of the chapter?

We do not know of any legitimate or competent authority to the contrary. This interpretation is certainly a very ancient one, although not in modern times a very common or popular one. Philo the Jew held it, as also Origen, St. Augustine, and others in their day; and in later times Melchior Canus and Cardinal Cajetan.<sup>1</sup> It has

<sup>1</sup>“Philo, Origen, St. Augustine, and some others, fearing that from this opinion (viz., of the six literal days) disagreeable consequences



therefore this advantage, that it cannot be sneered at as owing its origin more to the pressure of modern discoveries in physical science, than to a fair consideration of the sacred text. The learned commentators just mentioned could have had no thought of harmonizing their views with geological data when they wrote. On the contrary, their views of cosmogony were quite antagonistic to the revelations of modern science, for they considered that all things were created simultaneously, without any intervals of ages or days—not even so much as six minutes. With our present lights we cannot, of course, hold with them to a simultaneous creation of the world such as it now is, but we may fairly avail ourselves of their liberal interpretation of the Scripture text, and with them understand the “six days” to be neither literal days, nor any measure whatever of time, but figurative or symbolical expressions under which the works of creation are classified.<sup>1</sup>

might be drawn contrary to the immutability and sovereign power of the Creator, have advanced that there should not be understood here a successive creation in six days, but only an order of reason, to convey to our minds distinctly the formation of the universe.” Calmet. Comm. sur la Genese. Orig. ed. of 1707, p. 5.

“*Nam rusticæ simplicitatis est,*” says Philo, “*putare sex diebus, certe tempore quod mundo posterius est, mundum esse conditum.*” Apud Corn. à Lapide in Deut. v, 12.

<sup>1</sup> Their views are thus summed up by Calmet: “In regard to the Sabbath, it is disputed whether the Lord created the world simultaneously, by a single fiat and one single act, or whether he set about it, so to speak, at six different times, and in a succession of six days, so that the seventh day of the week was the very day of the Lord’s rest, and the end of a successive creation. There is a great difference of opinion upon this question. Philo, Origen, St. Augustine, Procopius, and several moderns sustain that God not only created all matter at once, and in a moment, but that he likewise reduced it to form and order at once, and without any delay of six days; that the recital which Moses makes, and the distribution he marks out of the work of the Lord in six days, is not any succession of time, but a succession of order and reason, for the express purpose of proportioning himself to the understanding of the peo-

Now, as to the principle upon which this classification is made—it would be very natural to suppose it one adopted by the Prophet himself, in accordance with the lights of the times in which he lived, and his own conceptions of the physical world. Whatever direction was given to his pen by inspiration would be for the purpose of connecting what he wrote with religious mysteries, rather than to teach through him any secrets of profane learning or natural science. Under this supposition, we suggest that he would naturally place first those things which seemed to him the most elementary and simple—chaotic matter before organisms, light before the sun and stars, water before land, and the living creatures according to their apparent dignity in the scale of being, the highest organisms being named latest. And such is the order of Genesis.

But why should these classes take their names from the six days of a week? Is it not something singular to classify natural objects by terms chosen from measures of time?

Not so very singular. A distinguished geologist of the United States has done the same thing. Prof. Rogers classifies all the fossiliferous rocks below the Upper New Red Sandstone into eight series corresponding to eight different hours of the day.<sup>1</sup> We must consider the peculiar style of this chapter of Genesis. It is not written in the exact language of philosophy, or history, nor according to any method of science, but in that free and illustrative language in which sublime truths are best taught to simple minds. It is the anthropological style throughout. The

ple, and to give them a more distinct notion of the creation of beings, by distributing them in this way into divisions, and according to a certain classification." Calmet's Dict. : Sabbath.

<sup>1</sup> These eight series are, the Primal, Matinal, Levant, Premeridial, Meridial, Postmeridial, Vespertine, and Seral. The classification of the Prophet is upon an analogous principle, but in far better taste.

author represents God as laboring, and taking time in his labor, deliberating, determining, and talking to himself as he labors, and, when his work is done, examining it critically to see if it is good, and finally resting as would a laboring man. Now the labor of man is naturally measured by the rising and setting of the sun : "*Man shall go forth to his work, and to his labor until the evening.*" It is in happy keeping with the rest of the chapter to lend the idea of a week of daily labor to the divine work, with a workman's day of rest at the close, although it would be strangely inconsistent with every correct notion of God to take this language for literally true. But additional reasons may be assigned for the classification of the divine work by the days of a week. The institution of the Sabbath not only fulfilled the natural obligation of human society to observe stated times of public worship, but was expressly appointed as a religious festival to commemorate the creation. Now this furnishes motive enough why the author should model his account of the divine labor and rest by the days of the Hebrew week. In this light the days of Genesis assume a symbolical character. They are in typical relation with sacred institutions and deep religious mysteries. They indicate the bondage of the Israelites in Egypt, and their emancipation, the days of labor and rest prescribed in the third commandment, the periods of seven years, and of seven weeks of years, terminated by the sabbatical year and the year of Jubilee, the passion and death of the Saviour of men terminated by his resurrection, and, finally, the great work of the redemption to be closed by the final rest of all the saints in heaven.

There are interpreters whose peculiar bias of mind leads them always to cling to the most literal sense. We would beg such to remember that, in the Hebrew lan-

guage, the present, imperfect, preterit, pluperfect, and aorists are all expressed by one and the same tense, the difference of time being mostly marked by the context. When, with this in view, one reads the whole chapter as in the child-like style of the original, "And God say—God make—God call," &c., the sentences lose much of that appearance of consecutive narrative which translations give them, and the Prophet's whole account of creation assumes more plainly what we conceive to be its real character, namely, a theological introduction to his primitive history of mankind.

An objection is sometimes urged against the theory of our last chapter, which, if well founded, is equally adverse to this. In Exodus xx, 11, we read that "*in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and the sea and all things that are in them, and rested on the seventh day: therefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it.*" It would seem, then, that the reason why God appointed the seventh day for a holyday of rest was, because on that day he himself had rested from the work of creation. Now, if that day of God's rest was a literal day like the Sabbath of the Jews, the other six must have been the same.

In reply, we suggest that the objection supposes more in the passage just cited than the words warrant. It does not so clearly appear that the seventh day of the Hebrew week was the same as the seventh of the creation, but only that each was the seventh of its own week. On the other hand, it is plain from the nature of the case, that the day of God's rest was not a literal day, nor measured by any time whatever. That rest can mean nothing else than the cessation from labor, or the accomplishment of the divine work. That rest, then, is not yet finished—or rather, to speak more correctly, it was finished as soon as begun, for by its very nature it occupied no space of time. From this

very fact, St. Augustine concludes that the first six days also were not real days, nor intended to designate any space of time whatever. "For," he says, "if in the other days (the first six of Genesis) the evening and morning signify such alternations of time as are now accomplished by the actual space of a day, I do not see why the seventh day should not close with an evening and its night with a morning also, so that it might be said as well: "*And the evening and the morning were the seventh day.*" For surely that is one of those days which taken together constitute seven, and which being repeated make up months, and years, and ages. \* \* \* It is most probable, therefore, that while these our present seven days, named and numbered as they are, and following each other in succession, traverse real spaces of time, those first six days are to be understood as being of an unusual kind unknown to our experience, and explicable only by the actual conditions of things at the time. In them, both the evening and the morning, as well as the light itself, and the darkness, that is, the day and night, did not afford that sort of vicissitude which these afford by the revolution of the sun. This certainly we are compelled to acknowledge in regard to those three days which are mentioned and enumerated before the creation of the luminaries."<sup>1</sup> St. Augustine elsewhere expresses his opinion that the matter of the universe was prior to the organized world only in that sense in which sound is prior to music, "*non in tempore, sed in origine,*" not in the order of time, but of origin.<sup>2</sup> The same may be understood of the succession of days in the Mosaic account; not a succession in the order of events, but in the order of conception; not in the order of execution, but that of plan; not as things happen before the eyes of men,

<sup>1</sup> De Genesi ad literam, lib. iv, cap. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Confession., lib. xii, cap. 29.

but as they present themselves to the "angelic intelligences," who enjoy the beatific vision, and see things mapped in the mind of God in their truest order.

It was our good fortune lately to be present at a lecture delivered by Professor Agassiz on "The Position of Man in Natural History." He demonstrated how one plan of structure runs through all the various grades of vertebrates—fish, serpents, birds, and mammals including man. Just as different styles obtain in the same order of architecture, so all these, albeit varying widely in their external forms, are constructed on one essential principle, viz., that of a backbone, which is set, like a key beam, or ridge pole, between two opposite systems of arches. He traced on a blackboard the progress of these forms through all the different grades of development, making that which was first a fish, to grow, by slight obliterations and additions, through higher and higher types of being, until at last it appeared with the noble proportions of man. Yet (he argued against the Progressionists) this development is not a historical one; geology proves the contrary. We find, for instance, in the earliest fossil fish, those of the Silurian formation, some of the peculiar characteristics of higher forms of life, such as the ball and socket joint, and the separation of the head from the body by a neck. The development therefore is only one of plan in the mind of the great Architect and Creator. No species ever departs from its own type to assume the features of a nobler, nor can we infer that the lowest forms have of necessity been the earliest in actual existence.

This exemplifies well the idea of St. Augustine in regard to the six days of Genesis. They were stages of progressive development, but the development existed only in the plan. The days or degrees of progress described by the sacred historian were mapped out in that divine mind

which planned the world of nature, but they had no such order of succession in point of time. The Progressionists read the Book of Nature as the literalists read the Book of Genesis, confounding the order of system or plan, with the historical order of time.

We must confess that, to our mind, this theory is the most simple and satisfactory of any. Recent discoveries in science have made the first—that of literal days—a very awkward one to defend, to say the least; while the second—that of indefinite long periods—although not in direct conflict with any certain acquisitions of science, and defensible enough in point of mere critical construction, falls far below our present theory in point of simplicity. We have all been taught to regard the Mosaic account of creation as strictly historical, and it is not easy to divest oneself of so familiar an impression; but this difficulty once overcome, and a symbolical sense in the “six days” admitted, the whole way seems clear, and all the rest of the chapter is easily explained. Besides, the theory is an old one, as we have already seen; and now that so much new light has been thrown upon the physical history of the earth by geological discoveries, it merits a new hearing among the rest. It is open to attack only upon its religious side. In its relations with natural science the advantages of it are obvious enough, and may be briefly stated as follows:

All the scientific difficulties presented to the reader of the first of Genesis are at once solved according to this theory. What matter, then, how old the earth may seem? A health to her wrinkled visage and her gray locks! She's an orthodox old planet, after all. What matter which creatures were first created? Neither measure of time, nor order of succession is attributed to the text. That three days are given by Moses, before either sun, moon, or

stars appeared to mark the time, occasions no embarrassment here as in the other theories. They are days which have nothing to do with the revolutions of the earth, belonging to a different order of things, and the Prophet may say to the astronomers: "To me it is of the least account to be judged by you, or by day of man."<sup>1</sup> This theory leaves the interpreter far less hampered by technical objections, and free to expound the religious doctrine of the chapter, with all its spiritual treasures. If admitted, it cannot but give great satisfaction to the Christian geologist, since he may then freely follow the light of his science without exposing himself to ignorant charges of infidelity; and many an excellent Christian has suffered unjustly and sorely in this way. A third advantage, and certainly the greatest of all—it gives us a more noble and strictly religious view of the first of Genesis.

Interpreted in such a way, this grand chapter is no longer to be treated as a mere physical essay, a cosmogony, a historical or antiquarian treasure, but as a majestic exposition of that great article of Hebrew faith, the first also of the Christian symbol—"CREDO IN UNUM DEUM, FACTOREM CÆLI ET TERRÆ." The Prophet could have had no intention to instruct in questions of natural science, or to reveal matters of mere secular curiosity. His object was purely a religious one. It was simply to teach, in accordance with the old patriarchal traditions, in great part forgotten by the Gentiles and loosely held even by the Hebrews, that all things—water, air, earth, light, sun, moon, stars, plants, fish, reptiles, four-footed beasts, and man himself—had been created according to their several natures, and that the very primal substance of the world was not eternal, but called into existence by the will of God. By doing this he struck a sweeping blow at all the

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. iv, 3.



various idolatries of the heathen, for scarcely any type of creature existed in the air, on earth, or in the waters, which was not made an object of superstitious adoration. This would seem to be the reason why so many objects in nature are enumerated by the Prophet. Strictly speaking, it should have been enough to say, in the language of St. John: "*By Him were all things made, and without Him was nothing made.*" But in addressing the multitude, governed always by impressions more than by reflection, it was necessary to draw a distinct picture of each thing created, and leave it impressed on their minds as a safeguard against idolatry. Such is our exegesis of the first of Genesis, and here we rest the case.

"Quite a lawyer-like termination," said Walter, throwing down the manuscript upon the table; "and now I have an idea of my own to submit. There is something dramatic—at least scenic—in the chapter. Don't you think so?"

"There is indeed," I replied, "both in style and plan. It is, to be sure, in the form of an instruction; it is essentially didactic; but it is popularly so, and therefore, as we say, somewhat dramatic. It is addressed to the mind of the multitude, not to philosophers, naturalists, or scholars of any kind. We find in it that art which belongs to all popular men, whether authors or orators, the art of enlarging upon a great truth, and presenting it over and over again in a great variety of detail and expression, until the minds of the auditors or readers are thoroughly imbued with it, and familiar with its bearings. The great truth presented and re-presented over and over again in this chapter, is the origin of all things, absolutely all, from the creative hand of the only uncreated and eternal God. It is, as we have said before, the amplification, the detailed exposition of that great first article of religion: "*Credo*

*in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem, factorem cæli et terræ."*

"It seems to me, Uncle——"

"Never, perhaps, among a people professedly Christian, was there more need of upholding this primary doctrine than in our day and country, and it makes one loath to admit of any interpretation of the first of Genesis, which compels our theologians to descend from their high religious ground, to dispute in the mines, and quarries, and observatories upon questions purely profane. And yet—the *physical* history of this earth most certainly has been written by a divine hand in the rocks that lie upon its bosom; and if they are right who say that it is written in the first of Genesis also, and by the same hand, then must we make the records square."

"I was about to say, Sir——"

"What had the great Prophet of the Hebrews to do with the age of the world, or with the relative priorities of the earth and the stars, or of the different creatures of the land and the waters, or with the secrets of meteorology? He stood as the chosen mediator between his God and a sensual, hard-headed people, a people whose ancient faith and primitive simplicity of manners had almost melted away before the polished paganism and voluptuous civilization of Egypt. Picture to yourself that Prophet wearied and wasted with anxiety, sick of life, and often driven to the verge of despair by the moral depravity, the spiritual obduracy of his people, and their repeated relapses into idolatry. Call up thus to mind the perplexities of his position coupled with the sublime character of his mission. See him then sitting down with his tablets or sheets of papyrus to write for the instruction of such a people—to write something at once appropriate to their present ignorance, errors, and dangers, and worthy of their lofty voca-

tion. Such reflections will prepare us for a noble and solemnly religious interpretation of that grand first chapter of Genesis. We shall see something else in it than a quaint lecture on cosmogony. We shall see there the great Hebrew creed: "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*" All things were made, and made by Him, whether in the heavens, on the earth, or under the waters. He made the light. He made the day and night. He made the sky, the waters beneath it, and the reservoirs of rain above it. He made the ocean and the dry land. He made the grass, and every plant and tree. He made the sun, the moon and stars, and He alone appointed their uses,—and thus the Prophet goes on enumerating everything that ever was or might be made an object of superstitious worship, and attributes the origin of all to the hand of that one uncreated and eternal Being to whom all adoration is due."

"I agree with you, Uncle Jonathan," said Walter; "it is the grand religious view of the chapter, and if it contains no more than this, it is rich enough. But let me add one question more. Supposing the word Day to have the figurative or symbolical meaning attributed to it in this theory, why do we have so often repeated, and at such regular intervals, that formula which contains it: 'And the evening and the morning were the first day—second day,' &c.? It has a very emphatic sound, and this no doubt helps to strengthen the advocates of the literal theory in their convictions."

"The emphasis," I replied, "can only lend its strength to that signification which we attach to the words. It is like a good knocker: it sounds loud, no matter who may be at the door."

"But, let the signification be what it may—why so often repeated?"

“The repetition makes the account more dramatic and life-like, and is in keeping with the whole style of the chapter.”

“By why repeated always in the same words?”

“I cannot venture to say. It has a stirring effect, like the beat of a drum at intervals. I have heard it suggested by a learned and eminent prelate that it has all the appearance of a chorus. The resemblance is more striking when the verse is literally translated, thus—*‘Evening was and morning was—day one—day the second,’* &c. Such is the theological importance of this chapter, that it may well have constituted in the very beginning a lesson to be publicly read, perhaps chanted too, by the Hebrews in their religious assemblies; and this verse may have been introduced at intervals as a choral response. But of course this is only conjecture. Our knowledge of times so ancient is necessarily scanty, and all that we know is but a fragment from the forgotten mass. A thousand questions may be raised in reference to the book of Genesis which no human wisdom can solve, for the requisite data are wanting. Let us be satisfied, without knowing everything.

——— ‘This ancient Book  
Its quaint, old, honest look  
Would lack, if on its pages  
Were scattered nothing of the dust of ages.’”

## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE DELUGE: WAS IT UNIVERSAL

"The rain pours on: no star illumes  
The blackness of the roaring sky,  
And each successive billow booms  
Nigher still, and still more nigh.  
And now upon the howling blast  
The wreaths of spray come thick and fast;  
And a great billow by the tempest curled  
Falls with a thundering crash; and all is o'er.  
And what is left of all this glorious world?  
A sky without a beam, a sea without a shore."

MACAULAY.

If our honest efforts hitherto have been successful, we have demonstrated that, whatever obscurity may still hover over the subject, no contradiction can be made out between the Mosaic account of creation and the record of nature. Other difficulties however remain, which the champion of Holy Writ must be prepared to encounter. This same book of Genesis informs us, if commonly understood aright, that an universal flood took place, in the days of Noe, which covered the whole earth, and from which no living creature escaped, except the family of the Patriarch himself, and the animals which were sheltered with him in the Ark. Now, all persons who have kept pace with the progress of modern science know that, independently of the old and oft-objected difficulties,<sup>1</sup> new and very seri-

<sup>1</sup> That the Deluge could not have been geographically universal has been very learnedly argued, upon grounds quite independent of geology or archæology, by theologians too far removed from all suspicion of de-

ous ones have been developed, which with the reader's permission we will state.

Natural History is in opposition to an universal deluge. The book of Genesis informs us that Noe took with him into the Ark a pair of every species of air-breathing animal on the earth. "*In the self-same day Noe, and Sem, and Cham, and Japheth his sons, his wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, went into the Ark; they and every beast according to its kind, and all the cattle in their kind, and every thing that moveth upon the earth according to its kind, and every fowl according to its kind, all birds, and all that fly, went in to Noe into the Ark, two and two of all flesh wherein was the breath of life.*" Now, in earlier times, when our knowledge of the animated creation was far less extended, it was thought possible to find place within the dimensions of the Ark,<sup>1</sup> for all the known species of air-breathing animals. Thus, in his History of the World, Sir Walter Raleigh, himself a sea captain, and therefore, says Mr. Hugh Miller, "a man who had a more practical acquaintance with *stowage* than perhaps any of the other writers who have speculated on the capabilities of the Ark," estimates the number of distinct species of beasts at eighty-nine, but calls it one hundred in order to make allowance for any omitted in his estimate.<sup>2</sup> Calculating the room they ought to occupy, he

istical tendencies, such as Dr. Hagel, Prof. of Theology at the Lyceum of Dilingen. See Apologie des Moses. Absch. i, n. 21. Among the Protestants, Bishop Stillingfleet and Matthew Poole are cited to the same effect.

<sup>1</sup> "The Ark, if measured by the common or natural cubit, must have been a vessel 450 feet in length, 75 in breadth, and 55 feet in height. Measured by the palm cubit, it was 547 feet in length, by 91 feet in breadth. These last dimensions multiplied by three, the number of stories in the vessel, would give an area equal to about one seventh that of the great Crystal Palace of 1851."—HUGH MILLER. *Test of the Rocks*. Lect. viii.

<sup>2</sup> Calmet, a century later, in solving the same problem, estimates the quadrupeds at 130 species.—Dict. : v. Arche.

finds that they all "might be kept in one story or room of the Ark in their several cabins, their meat in a second, the birds and their provision in a third, with space to spare for Noah and his family, and all their necessities." In our days, however, the 89 mammals of Raleigh must be exchanged for a number not less than 1,658, to which must be added Lesson's 6,266 species of birds, and also, subtracting from the list of Charles Bonaparte the sea snakes, and perhaps the turtles, 642 reptiles which could not live outside the Ark in such a flood.<sup>1</sup> Besides this, it was necessary to bring together no less than 550,000 species of insects as computed in the year 1842, with means to feed and (since many of them are short lived) to breed. However satisfactory may have seemed in their day the calculations of Raleigh, Calmet, Buffon, and others, the dimensions of the Ark at the most liberal allowance could never suffice to accommodate the land animals, as we know them now.

But this is not the only, nor the most stubborn difficulty that Natural History presents us. The Mosaic account of the Deluge seems to be in direct conflict with a natural law which governs the geographical distribution of animals upon the earth, by which they are found grouped together, like with like, and often separated from other groups by natural barriers which they cannot pass. The animals of this new western world were found by its discoverers and first settlers to be utterly unlike those of the old. North America, South America, Europe, Africa, Australia, India, and the West Indian Archipelago, present each its peculiar world of animals; while, again, dis-

<sup>1</sup> Test. of the Rocks. Lect. viii. These enumerations of naturalists must be received with some caution. While the progress of discovery adds constantly new species to science, a closer observation frequently reduces to the rank of a variety what was taken at first for a distinct specific form.

inct groups are clustered on the same continent—the hardy North and the sunny South sheltering each its own type of life.

Now, it is true, that animals have their instincts which guide them in their selection of a dwelling place. A healthy location, a sufficient proximity to their place of business, the conveniences necessary to rear a young family—these and such like recommendations are perfectly well understood. They have their own tastes, too, in respect to the luxuries of air, climate, and scenery. Some take to the hills, some to the valleys, some to the meadows, and some to the morasses. Some love the deep shady forests, and some the sandy deserts ; some grow hardy in the frost, and some thrive best where summers are long. But all this will not account for the groupings of which we have spoken. Had the animals all spread from a common centre after the Flood, we should expect indeed that, as the earth became filled again, and the space to roam grew narrow, those of the same species would be found finally settled in groups, and that the range of each group would be limited to some district by their natural wants, the features of the country, and the character of their competitors in the struggle of life. But we should not expect to find *all* of the same species, and oftentimes all of the same genus in the same locality. The American continent would not have received all the tapirs, lamas, cougars, sloths, &c., and its peculiar birds of golden plumage. Some, we should think, would have lingered on the way, or have strayed in other directions ; and, especially, at that time when the question of crossing the ocean was in discussion, how is it they came to such a wondrous unanimity ? <sup>1</sup> There is no imaginable reason why nearly all the

<sup>1</sup> “The animals on the eastern continent are all different species from those in America, except those that in summer advance to the Arctic



various species of the marsupial quadrupeds should have carried their pouches from Mount Ararat to Australia, nor why the island of Madagascar should have attracted its stock of quadrupeds with such irresistible power that no stragglers are found settled elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> If all the animals of our earth have parted from the Ark as their centre of migration, is it not strange that not a single mammal should be found common to Europe and Australia, or South America?<sup>2</sup> Now facts such as these have brought the naturalists of our day to the conclusion that the animals which now people the earth have not been distributed from any single and common centre, but rather that the original centres of creation are many, each species having its own.

But further—and this seems to make the case conclusive against an universal deluge—it is evident that the same districts or provinces have been occupied by animals

regions, and can from thence, on their return in autumn, easily migrate to the temperate climates of either continent. All our quadrupeds, birds, reptiles, and even our plants in the temperate regions of America, are found to differ from those in every other part of the world.—BACHMAN. *Unity of the Race*, p. 250.

<sup>1</sup> “Separated from Africa by the Mozambique channel, which is 300 miles wide, Madagascar forms, with two or three small islands in its immediate vicinity, a zoological province by itself, all the species except one and nearly all the genera being peculiar. The only exception consists of a small insectivorous quadruped (*Centetes*), found also in the Mauritius, to which place it is supposed to have been taken in ships.” —*Princ. of Geology*, ch. 37.

<sup>2</sup> Darwin on the Origin of Species, ch. xi, p. 307: “In considering the distribution of organic beings over the face of the globe, the first great fact which strikes us is, that neither the similarity, nor the dissimilarity of the inhabitants of various regions can be accounted for by their climatal and other physical conditions. Of late almost every author who has studied the subject has come to this conclusion. The case of America alone would almost suffice to prove its truth. There is hardly a climate or condition in the Old World which cannot be paralleled in the New. \* \* \* Notwithstanding this, how widely different are their living productions!” *Ibid.*, p. 302.

of the same general type as now at very remote periods of the world's history—periods which are represented by the extinct species of the fossil world. The sloths and armadilloes peculiar to South America, the kangaroos of Australia, and the wingless birds of New Zealand tread upon the very soil beneath which kindred but fossil forms of life lie sepulchred. It is a settled fact then, that during long periods of time, reaching far beyond all human history, creatures of one species have succeeded to other species of the same or a similar type within the same areas.<sup>1</sup> The conclusion against any universal deluge is evident, the argument being briefly this: geology, in concert with zoology, shows that at periods long anterior to any supposable date of the Deluge the distribution of land animals upon the earth was much the same as now. But, if the groups of the antediluvian world have been all broken up by an overwhelming and destroying flood, it is unaccountable that the ancient districts should each have reclaimed anew its own peculiar fauna.

<sup>1</sup>“Mr. Clift, many years ago, showed that the fossil mammals from the Australian caves were closely allied to the living marsupials of that continent. In South America a similar relationship is manifest, even to an uneducated eye, in the gigantic pieces of armor, like those of the armadillo, found in several parts of La Plata; and Professor Owen has shown, in the most striking manner, that most of the fossil mammals buried there in such numbers are related to South American types. The relationship is even more clearly seen in the wonderful collection of fossil bones made by MM. Lund and Clausen, in the caves of Brazil. I was so much impressed with these facts that I strongly insisted in 1839 and 1845 on this ‘law of the succession of types’—on ‘this wonderful relationship between the dead and the living.’ Professor Owen has subsequently extended the same generalization to the mammals of the Old World. We see the same law in this author’s restoration of the extinct and gigantic birds of New Zealand. We see it also in the birds of the caves of Brazil. Mr. Woodward has shown that the same law holds good with sea shells.”—DARWIN. *Origin of the Species*, ch. x, p. 295.

To suppose this is to suppose a new miracle, and that a very needless one. In fact, if we believe in an universal deluge in the days of Noe, we shall have large drafts upon our faith. In addition to the miraculous nature of the Flood itself, we must also admit a most extraordinary complication of miracles before and after it. Let us suppose the Ark to have been built in some part of Asia. By what agency were animals, there unknown, brought in pairs from so many distant parts of the earth? And by what agency were they all reconducted safely to their original homes, across oceans, mountain chains, hot sandy deserts, and frozen seas—the impassable barriers that now pen them in?

The difficulty is in part an old one. St. Augustine suggests that they may have been carried to the more distant islands by angels; but since apparently a simpler means would be to create them anew in those localities, and since in such case there would be no need to preserve them from the flood at all, he conceives that animals of every kind were assembled in the Ark, not so much for the sake of safety, as to typify the gathering of all nations into the bosom of the Church.<sup>1</sup> The comments of ancient Fathers upon the Scriptures, whether just or not, are always noble, for they never forget the sacred character of the Book they loved so much to study. No wonder that they find deep religious mysteries, where others can see only a treasure of archæological curiosities, and no wonder that their sentiments are more liberal than those of modern commentators in questions where religious doctrine is not clearly concerned. Of course, we have not cited St. Augustine as solving the precise difficulty in hand, but to show that he had some appreciation of it even in his day.

Again, Geology is in opposition to an universal deluge.

<sup>1</sup> De Civitate Dei, lib. xvi, cap. vii.

The actual face of the earth shows that no such deluge has ever come to disturb it. There was a time in the infancy of that science, when geology was supposed to furnish manifest proofs of the deluge, and scientific men of the highest reputation encouraged the notion. "I agree," said Cuvier in an oft-quoted passage, "with MM. Deluc and Dolomieu in thinking that, if anything in geology be established, it is that the surface of our globe has undergone a great and sudden revolution, the date of which cannot be referred to a much earlier period than five or six thousand years ago." Cuvier was far from imputing to this flood the existence of the fossil shells, and other relics of the sea found in the rocks ; but apart from these, there are materials strewed about on the earth's surface, such as drifted sand and gravels, boulder stones and travelled rocks, moraines, and terraced beaches, which evidently owe their origin in chief part to the action of water. These might easily at first be ascribed to one cause and one period, and what would account for it so naturally as the deluge of Noe ? Many eminent geologists were at one time glad to coincide with this view, but the advance of science has compelled them all to recant, not excepting among the rest several clergymen distinguished for their geological attainments, such as Dr. Buckland, Dean of Westminster, Mr. Conybeare, Dean of Llandaff, and Professor Hitchcock, of Amherst College, Massachusetts.<sup>1</sup> "Bearing upon this difficult question," says another (Professor Sedgwick, of Cambridge University), "there is, I

<sup>1</sup> "Another theory very widely adopted," says Prof. Hitchcock, "imputed these effects to the deluge of Noah. But it is now almost universally abandoned by geologists ; because the remains of man have not been found in drift ; because most of the animals found in it belong to extinct species ; because the period occupied by the Noachian deluge was much too short ; and because the phenomena cannot be explained by water alone."—*Elem. Geol.*, sec. vi, p. 269.

think, one great negative conclusion now incontestably established—that the vast masses of diluvial gravel, scattered almost over the whole surface of the earth, *do not belong to one violent and transitory period*. It was indeed a most unwarranted conclusion when we assumed the contemporaneity of all the superficial gravel on the earth. We saw the clearest traces of diluvial action, and we had in our sacred histories the record of a general deluge. On this double testimony it was that we gave a unity to a vast succession of phenomena, not one of which we perfectly comprehended, and under the name diluvium classed them all together.”<sup>1</sup>

But, it may be urged, this is only negative proof. It shows only that a particular species of proof once relied upon to corroborate the Mosaic account, is unsound. It proves nothing positively against an universal deluge. Besides, the fact that the phenomena of diluvium or drift cannot *all* be attributed to one cause, and one epoch, does not argue that some of them may not be owing to the deluge of Noe. Let us, for instance, make this supposition: The earth has several times been visited by deluges, of greater or less extent, which have left their several traces on its surface in the phenomena of scattered sands, gravel and boulders of the Drift period, so called. The last of these was universal, and identical with that of Noe.

This suggestion will not do. The phenomena in question are all local and limited. They are not attributable to deluges of any kind, but rather to ocean currents setting in from the north, such as now bring down the icebergs to our latitudes.<sup>2</sup> The same causes are still at work

<sup>1</sup> Cited by Dr. Pye Smith. Geol. and Scrip., lect. v, p. 127.

<sup>2</sup> The course of a drift may be determined by the boulders and trains of gravel and sand it has left along the way, by striæ or scratches on

in our day, strewing the same materials over the broad lap of the ocean, albeit not so profusely perhaps as when the Atlantic was dry, and our country served in its turn for sea bottom. Besides, the materials deposited by the drift are principally of a light, loose character, lying superficially above the solid strata. An universal flood occurring at any time since the continents have assumed their present shape would be likely to obliterate in some degree the marks of the earlier drift, and leave tokens of its own presence and power. Geologists, however, have discovered no such tokens. But at least one fact is directly and positively opposed to the notion of an universal deluge during the period of human history. We allude to certain volcanic mountains, whose sides, formed by showers of ashes and currents of lava, alternating with beds of vegetable mould, serve after some fashion as chroniclers and chronometers of bygone ages, while the character of a portion of their materials, loose, light, but undisturbed, bears testimony that no flood has ever invaded their repose. The argument is stated by Hugh Miller as follows :

“The cones of volcanic craters are formed of loose incoherent scorïæ and ashes, and, when exposed, as in the case of submarine volcanoes such as Graham’s Island and the islands of Nyoe and Sabrina, to the denuding force of waves and currents, they have in a few weeks, or at most a few months, been washed completely away. And yet in various parts of the world, such as Auvergne in central France, and along the flanks of Ætna, there are cones of long extinct or slumbering volcanoes, which, though of at least triple the antiquity of the Noachian deluge, and

the rocks it passed over, and by tracing back travelled fragments of rock to their parent strata. Thus the ground which lies between the Catskill Mountains and the river is everywhere strewn with stray fragments of sandstone, the counterparts of which cannot be found short of the Helderberg hills, many miles to the northward.

though composed of the ordinary incoherent materials, exhibit no marks of denudation. According to the calculations of Sir Charles Lyell, no devastating flood could have passed over the forest zone of *Ætna* during the last twelve thousand years,—for such is the antiquity which he assigns to its older lateral cones that retain in integrity their original shape ; and the volcanic cones of Auvergne, which enclose in their ashes the remains of extinct animals, and present an outline as perfect as those of *Ætna*, are deemed older still. Graham Island arose out of the sea early in July, 1831 ; in the beginning of the following August it had attained to a circumference of three miles, and to a height of two hundred feet ; and yet in less than three months from that time the waves had washed its immense mass down to the sea level ; and in a few weeks more it existed but as a dangerous shoal. And such inevitably would have been the fate of the equally incoherent cone-like craters of *Ætna* and Auvergne during the seven and a half months that intervened between the breaking up of the fountains of the great deep and the reappearance of the mountain tops, had they been included within the area of the deluge. It is estimated that even the newer Auvergne lavas are as old as the times of the Miocene. It is at least a demonstrable fact, that the slow action of streams had hollowed them in several places into deep chasms nearly two thousand years ago ; for the remains of Roman works of about that age survive, to show that they had then, as now, to be spanned over by bridges, and that baths had been erected in their denuded recesses ; and yet the craters out of which these lavas had flowed retain wellnigh all their original sharpness of outline. No wave ever dashed against their symmetrically sloping sides. Now," continues Mr. Miller, "I have in no instance seen the argument derivable from this class of facts fairly met. The

supposed mistake of the Canonico Recupero, or rather of Brydone, who argued that the 'lowest of a series of seven distinct lavas of *Ætna*, most of them covered by thick intervening beds of rich earth, must have been fourteen thousand years old,' has been often referred to in the controversy. Brydone or the Canon mistook, it has been said, beds of brown ashes, each of which might have been deposited during a single shower, for beds of rich earth, each of which would have taken centuries to form. The oldest of the series of lava beds therefore, instead of being fourteen thousand, might be scarce fourteen hundred years old. And if Brydone or the Canon were thus mistaken in their calculations, why may not the modern geologists be also mistaken in theirs? Now, altogether waiving the question as to whether the ingenious traveller of eighty-six years ago was or was not mistaken in his estimate,—for to those acquainted with geological facts in general, or more particularly with the elaborate descriptions of *Ætna* given during the last thirty years by Elie de Beaumont, Hoffmann, and Sir Charles Lyell, the facts of Brydone, in their bearing on either the age of the earth or the age of the mountain, can well be spared,—waiving, I say, the question whether the traveller was in reality in mistake, I must be permitted to remark, that the concurrent testimony of geologists cannot in fairness be placed on the same level as the testimony of a man who, though accomplished and intelligent, was not only no geologist, but who observed and described ere geology had any existence as a science."

Mr. Miller, it is true, was not the most cool and cautious of mortals, but it is not easy to evade the facts he alleges ;

"For facts are chiels that winna ding,  
And downa be disputed,"



and the above are a few of many facts in nature all pointing to the same conclusion. That conclusion is well stated in the language of a learned and accomplished writer, himself a clergyman : "Geological evidence is adverse to the admission of a deluge simultaneous and universal for every part of the earth's surface. In proportion to the care and accuracy with which the investigation of physical facts has been carried on, so the proofs have accumulated that there never was a period, since any vestiges occur of organized creatures, when the earth did not possess a varied face, partly dry land, with its vegetable and animal occupiers, and partly the wide domain of the waters, possessing their numerous inhabitants."<sup>1</sup>

These are not, by any means, all the arguments which may be urged to the same effect ; some are too old and too familiar to need repeating ; others rest upon disputed facts.<sup>2</sup> We have only alleged those which have grown up with the development of modern science, and repose upon facts which are admitted by all those whose names make authority in their respective branches of learning. And here we rest our statement of the question, considering that the case is fairly made out against an universal deluge. It only remains now to reconcile the account in Genesis with these scientific facts.

The first point to be settled is this. What is the real meaning of the sacred author ? What impression did he really intend to convey ? The account, we should say, is certainly historical, and not primarily doctrinal or spiritual. It would require a great stretch of imagination to set it

<sup>1</sup> Scripture and Geology, by Rev. Pye Smith. Lect. v.

<sup>2</sup> As, for example, the great age attributed to certain trees, which it is argued could not have survived a deluge. For some cypresses growing in America, not less than 5,000 or 6,000 years of existence have been claimed. It is in dispute how far the so-called *annual* rings of growth may be relied upon in such case.

down as allegory. It is historical then, and gives us the account of a real flood. But does the sacred historian intend to convey to the minds of his readers the impression that this flood was really universal, extending over the whole earth?

Many able writers think not. They essay to show, both by general arguments and on critical grounds that the Mosaic description will apply very well to a partial deluge. Surely, so they reason, the purpose of God in punishing man and purging the earth would be accomplished by submerging only such portions of the land as were then inhabited by man, or by that portion of mankind which excited his anger. We read that "*the earth was corrupted before God, and was filled with iniquity. And when God had seen that the earth was corrupted (for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth) he said to Noe: The end of all flesh is come before me, the earth is filled with iniquity through them, and I will destroy them with the earth.*" Whatever other living creatures perished in the flood were destroyed only for man's sake, being in themselves incapable of any moral corruption; and it is hard to find a reason why regions of the globe should be included in the catastrophe which were untenanted at the time except by the wild animals of the desert.

True it is, that the language of the Prophet is very comprehensive: "*And the waters prevailed beyond measure upon the earth, and all the high mountains under the whole heavens were covered. The water was fifteen cubits higher than the mountains which it covered. And all flesh was destroyed that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beasts, and of all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all men. And all things wherein there is the breath of life on the earth died.*" But to this a reply is readily made. The language of the Prophet is

equally comprehensive in other places where we are obliged, in all sound reason, to interpret his meaning in a limited sense. For instance, speaking of the famine in the days of Joseph, he says: "*And the famine prevailed in the whole world.*" Must we suppose that this famine extended farther than Egypt, and the countries in communication with Egypt? Again we find these words in the second chapter of Deuteronomy: "*This day will I begin to send the dread and fear of thee upon the nations that dwell under the whole heaven.*" The whole heaven intended here must surely be understood as limited by the horizon that encircled the tribes of Canaan and perhaps the countries immediately surrounding. The same use of universal terms with a limited meaning is common with the other sacred authors. Thus, in the tenth chapter of the book of Kings, it is said that "*all the earth desired to see Solomon's face, to hear his wisdom;*" and our Lord himself, borrowing the style of the Old Testament, said to the unbelieving Jews: "*The queen of the south shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold a greater than Solomon is here.*" Now the Queen of Saba could have come but little more than a thousand miles to the court of Solomon. The following passage is also a very strong illustration from the New Testament of the like use of language: "*Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.*" The apostle Paul, doubtless, means to cover only a little more ground when he speaks of the Gospel, in his time, as "*preached in all the creation that is under heaven.*"

In fine, the writers of whom I speak consider the language of Genesis in regard to the Deluge as metonymic, employing, according to a very common method of speech,

universal terms with a limited meaning. If their theory of interpretation be admissible, of course all difficulty disappears, and no contradiction can be alleged between Genesis and geology.

To the minds of most persons, we imagine, a thoughtful consideration of the language of the sacred historian leaves the impression that he did, in his own mind, conceive of the Deluge as an universal one, including the whole family of man, and covering the entire face of the earth, and intended to be so understood. Such was most probably the common belief in his day. We have seen already, when treating of concurrent heathen traditions, that these traditions, in respect to the Deluge, have come down in the same form. To admit this sense in the narrative of Moses will not make it a matter of faith for us, unless we suppose, either that the flood was made known to him by divine revelation, which is not probable, or that the interests of religion required that his mind should be preserved from error on such a subject. Now, we have already seen that the idea of Inspiration, and consequently of the infallibility of the sacred Scriptures, should not be extended to anything which does not involve religious doctrine or morals.<sup>1</sup> Is this notion of the universality of the Deluge a religious question? It has been made so undoubtedly, but is it so rightly, and of its own nature? Is any spiritual doctrine involved in it? Does either the credibility or the purity of any divine truth depend upon it. Or, viewed as a miraculous event, can it be made a test question to prove the divine mission of Moses, as can those miracles which he himself wrought before the people in proof of his authority and doctrine? His own miraculous powers were enough to command belief to whatever he spoke, or wrote, in the name of God; they covered his

<sup>1</sup> See *supra*, chap. xvii.

whole character as a Prophet. Do they cover his whole nature as a man, with imperfect acquirements and a limited intelligence ? Do they cover his whole character as a writer of primitive history ? If not, then it is not necessary to weigh so closely the words in which the Deluge is narrated. It is permissible to suppose that Moses handed down this tradition as it came to him, pledging to his own people and to posterity no more than that honesty, industry, and judgment which characterize the good historian. If God guided his mind to draw the right moral lessons from this great catastrophe, and to place those points in it which are typical of greater things to come in their proper light, theology need require no more.

Now, if the principle above advanced be a sound one, it follows that in studying this narrative of the Flood a separate inquiry may be made in regard to these two points : first, *what that Flood really was* ; and secondly, *what it appeared to be* to those witnesses who transmitted the history of it to after times. What it really was must be determined by every consideration of history or science which can throw light upon the question. What it appeared to be, and what would naturally be the transmitted account of it such as it came down to the times of Moses, is another question, and a very interesting one, on which it may not be amiss to dwell for a moment.

In Genesis the progress and extent of the Deluge are described in terms which, although admitted to be really universal both in sound and sense, might apply very well to even a partial flood, as it would *appear* to Noe and his family, the only surviving witnesses. To other parties who received the account from them, the earth over which the waters prevailed could only mean, at most, the known and inhabited earth, for the testimony of the witnesses could extend no further ; and the "whole heaven" would

include only that section of the sky which extended over the inundated territory. Not knowing in their day what the real extent of the earth was, the survivors could only testify to their own impressions at the time, and to subsequent observation, unless we suppose that the real extent of the calamity was divinely revealed to them. If we take certain expressions of the sacred text in their literal sense, they would seem to imply not only that God communicated with Noe in respect to this Deluge, but that He himself had declared in express terms His intention to destroy the entire world of life upon the earth: "*And God said unto Noe : The end of all flesh is come before me,*" &c. But we have already seen language of this kind employed in the first chapter of Genesis, where it is clearly anthropological, words being put into the mouth of God where He cannot be supposed to have really spoken unless in that sublime sense in which God speaks *ad intra*, that is to say, within the circle of his own most blessed Trinity. It is in this sense we must understand these words: "And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night." "And God said: Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth." The same dramatic style prevails in the account of the Deluge, and we need not understand the above quoted allocution to Noe in the sense of a literal and external revelation made to him. It is, perhaps, only the common language of faith and piety which we hear daily, even in our own times, when spiritual men are speaking of the dealings of God's providence. They are the words of Moses, and sprang from the deep religious fountain of his own contemplative heart.

It is very supposable, therefore, that the sacred historian really believed the Deluge to be universal when it was not. It is even supposable that the eye witnesses who lived long before him entertained the same belief. • It

certainly would *seem* to cover the whole earth. To their eyes,

“Omnia pontus erant, et deerant littora ponto.”

If, therefore, we regard the narrative in Genesis not as a direct revelation, but rather as a descriptive account derived originally from the eye witnesses, and reproduced by the Prophet Moses as faithfully as tradition had brought it down to him—then, the description applies very well to a deluge of vast extent, supposed to be universal, but in reality only partial. The gradual, and perhaps successive subsidence of such portions of the land as were covered at that time by the human family, or such portions of it as were known to the Patriarch Noe, would be sufficient to introduce an overwhelming flood, and the reversing of the process would return the waters to the ocean bed or to the inland seas from which they came. Add to this a continuous gathering of clouds to shed their fury upon the devoted district, and we should have, methinks, as a necessary result, all the recorded phenomena of the great deluge. It would be either a miracle, or not ; but if a miracle, then one upon a most magnificent scale, and yet one against which the after face of nature bears no testimony that we know of.

There is, to our mind, something in the very description of the flood which localizes it. We are told indeed that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered, but immediately after it is added, that “*the water was fifteen cubits higher than the mountains which it covered.*” This cannot apply to every mountain, since their heights vary. It seems to imply a calculation made at the time, and handed down to after ages, in respect to some particular mountain, the highest of the neighborhood, and probably the same upon which the Ark stranded. Such a calculation could easily be made by noting the rate of sub-

sidence upon the side of the hill, and comparing it with the interval which elapsed between the first abatement of the storm and the stranding of the Ark. Or, indeed, the inmates of that vessel, even before they ceased floating could have noted the subsidence of the waters by the trees and rocks of the hill tops around them.

“When Noe from his single lattice gazed,  
The watery gleams of the returning sun  
Smiled sadly on the mountain peaks that rose  
Like islands of the Blest, happy and green.”<sup>1</sup>

We can readily imagine what curious eyes were glancing from that cabin over the waters, as soon as the window could be opened safely, and how that world of eight heads was busy with observations, and speculations, and comparing notes. Could we have the whole journal, what mind can conceive the full magic of its interest? The very scantiness and obscurity of the sacred record in regard to those events which transpired after the flood, seem to me to argue a long lapse of time between the days of Moses and the deluge he describes, far longer than any of our chronological computations will allow, and lends strength to the impression that the declarations and instructions of God to Noe (like those words which “the Lord said in his own heart,” chap. viii, v. 21) do not belong to the historical narrative, except as a sublime and religious investiture which the Prophet lends to it from his own deep sentiment of God’s presence and providence in that great event.

‘Here endeth the lesson,” said Walter. “But allow me, Uncle, to inquire now—has not the universality of the Deluge been always held as a necessary matter of faith?”

“Why, no. It has undoubtedly been the common understanding; but great difficulty has always been felt

<sup>1</sup> F. W. Faber. *The Mountains.*



in reconciling the idea with our notions of what is possible, or at least probable."

"Has not the Catholic Church ever passed upon this question?"

"No; nor, so far as I am aware, have any of her tribunals ever interfered with the free discussion of it. A book of Vossius, in which he maintained that the deluge of Noe was a local and not an universal one, was examined before the Consultors of the Sacred Congregation of the Index, in the year 1685, while Mabillon was at Rome, and this learned Benedictine, having been admitted into the Congregation, spoke so forcibly in the matter that they abstained from noting it with any censure."<sup>1</sup>

"This certainly relieves the question very much."

"The question is simply one of hermeneutical science, and not of faith. No point of religious doctrine depends upon it. To assert the geographical universality of the Deluge, and be mistaken, would be quite as serious an error, as to be mistaken on the contrary side; for he who mistakes on either side is in opposition to the Bible on that particular point, although ignorantly and innocently so. There was a time when it was thought a dangerous

<sup>1</sup> Ste. Bible Traduite, par M. Genoude. Prolog. The arguments of Mabillon before the Congregation of the Index, are given at length by Calmet in his dictionary. Had the opinion of Vossius been censured by that Congregation, it would be no infidelity for Catholics to believe it. The theory of Galileo in regard to the earth's motion was distinctly censured by the Congregation of the Inquisition as "formally heretical because expressly contrary to Holy Scriptures," and his letters and the works of Copernicus and Kepler on the subject were for a long time upon the "Index." Yet what Catholic doubts the truth of the Copernican system, or believes the Holy Scriptures to furnish any authority against it? The decisions of these Congregations are disciplinary, binding on the religious obedience of Catholics until rescinded, but do not make faith, nor fetter them in their private convictions. No theologian believes them to be infallible. When the great Church speaks in her Councils, that voice cannot be mistaken by her children.

error to hold that the earth was round and moves, and now we should look upon any one as a simpleton that should quote the Bible as authority to the contrary. We are in great part creatures of habit ; our familiar thoughts grow to be sacred in time, only because they are familiar. We come to look upon the accumulations of theology, which is only a human science, with that same reverence which belongs to the actual deposit of faith ; and so we bow down before the oracles of human reason as though they were voices from heaven."

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

"In the primeval age, a dateless while,  
The vacant shepherd wandered with his flock,  
Pitching his tent where'er the green grass waved."

COLERIDGE.

GEOLOGISTS and naturalists are not the only men engaged in science who have difficulties to urge against the Deluge. The Archæologists are also interested in the question. It is not easy, they tell us, to admit of any flood in the days of Noe sufficiently extensive to sweep away all the human race except the Patriarch's own family. And they assign the following reasons.

The chronology of the Old Testament fixes the date of the Deluge at 2,344 years before Christ. This is Usher's system, founded on the Hebrew Bible; and the very longest computation, taken from the Septuagint version, only carries us back 900 years farther. Now the Science of Archæology furnishes some very embarrassing evidence bearing upon this question. The beginning of the Egyptian monarchy claims date from a much earlier epoch. The era of Menes, its first king and founder, according to Chevalier Bunsen, is 3,643 years before Christ; according to Lepsius, B. C. 3,893.<sup>1</sup> The kings of the 4th dynasty,

<sup>1</sup> See New Amer. Cyclop.: Egypt. Fragments have come down to us of a history of Egypt by Manetho, who wrote about B. C. 280. These give us a list of the dynasties and sovereigns of Egypt, from Menes, the founder of the monarchy. The general correctness of the list is consid-

who reigned at Memphis as early at least as B. C. 2,450, were the pyramid builders. These they intended for their tombs; their names are inscribed therein, and their coffins found. The monuments of this early period show that the Egyptians had then already made great advances in the arts and habits of civilized life. The masonry of their buildings was equal to that of any other period, ancient or modern. The art of making glass was known, and the furniture, costumes, implements of trade and agriculture, and the manners and customs of the people, are indicative of a refined civilization. No such deluge as that described in the book of Genesis has ever cast its wasting waves against the monuments of Egypt, nor drowned its teeming population during this long succession of dynasties. In short, Egypt, it would seem, has remained well peopled and unflooded since a much earlier epoch than the sacred Scriptures assign to Noe.

In reply, we may say, in the first place, that the whole objection falls to the ground, if we suppose, as was already intimated in the last chapter, that the Deluge was not even so far universal as to include the entire family of mankind, but only a large territory with the race which inhabited it. Several writers of great reputation in the science of geology have pointed out, as easily subject to a vast flood, a large region in Asia, including the very territory pointed out as the central scene of the catastrophe,

ered to have been established by comparison with the inscriptions in the monuments. It comprises 31 dynasties which reigned successively in Egypt, and numbers upward of 300 kings, the sum of whose reigns from Menes to Nectanebo II, B. C. 351, is 3,555 years. "This succession of time," says Bunsen, "the vastest hitherto established anywhere in the old world, is now also the best authenticated. It is based upon lists of kings and their regnal years; and these lists are corroborated and elucidated by contemporary monuments up to the 4th dynasty with slight breaks, an authentication which is as unexampled as its extent."

and the dwelling place of the survivors, by the Chaldean traditions of Berosus as well as by Moses.<sup>1</sup> But the difficulty is not very formidable even for those who are unwilling to take this view, as we shall proceed to show.

The objection just presented is directed primarily against the supposed date of the Deluge, and is only available against the authority of the sacred Scriptures on the supposition that the date of that event is fixed by their authority. Now, with due respect to Archbishop Usher, and many others, who have elaborated chronological schemes of the history of the world from Adam downward, we feel compelled to say that, in our opinion, no confidence can be placed in any of them. A great uncertainty—we speak only of chronological uncertainty—attaches to all ancient history, sacred and profane; and in saying this, we are supported by very grave authority. “There are authors of note,” says Calmet, “who, after long and serious researches in chronology, have been so little satisfied with their studies and labors, that they have not hesitated to avow that it was impossible to fix an exact and consecutive chronology upon the sole narrative of events given in sacred history, and *à fortiori* in profane history, which is for the most part less circumstantial, and always of an infinitely inferior authority to that of the Scriptures. It appears by the history of Josephus in more than one place, that the years of the Judges and of the periods of servitude which happened in their time are not continuous and immediately consecutive, having been interrupted by anarchies which preceded the servitudes of the Israelites. Such is also the opinion of Julius Africanus in his chronology. Isaac Vossius remarks that in history the duration of cap-

<sup>1</sup> For example, Sir Charles Lyell and Hugh Miller. See New Amer. Cycl.: Deluge. The boundaries of this region have been already given. See c. xxii, p. 270.

tivities and anarchies are not expressed, being regarded as dead and calamitous spaces. He adds that, in this numbering of years, Josephus omits the anarchies, but not the captivities.<sup>1</sup> M. Simon has the same sentiments in respect to chronology with Vossius. He thinks that, the Sacred Books being only abridgments of records much more extended, it is impossible to establish for the Scriptures an exact and certain chronology, because in them the genealogies are not always immediately consecutive.<sup>2</sup> Examples of these retrenched genealogies are seen in 1 Esdras vii, 3, where there are six omitted generations, and in St. Matthew, where six persons (at least) are wanting to the genealogy of Jesus Christ. St. Jerome, in speaking of the diversities which are remarked in the chronology of the kings of Juda and Israel, says it is only lost time to apply to the study of genealogies, and to amuse oneself with reconciling the difficulties which are met with in the chronology of the Scriptures. To this opinion of his he applies the counsel of St. Paul, "not to give heed to fables, and endless genealogies, which furnish questions rather than the edification of God."<sup>3</sup> Petavius<sup>4</sup> avows that we can know only by conjecture the years which have passed away since the commencement of the world to the Christian era, because the Scriptures, which are the only source whence this knowledge can be derived, do not mark the time with exactness."<sup>5</sup>

In truth, chronology, as we understand it, is a comparatively modern science, and very little importance was at-

<sup>1</sup> The conclusion of Vossius is as follows: "It may be taken for certain that the Sacred Scriptures contain only the measure of political time, and that no measure of physical time can be extracted from them."

—*Canon Chronol.*, p. 236. Apud Calmet.

<sup>2</sup> Hist. Critique du V. T., l. i. c. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Hieron. ad Vitalem.

<sup>4</sup> Ration. Temp. Part ii., lib. 2, c. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Calmet's Preface to Genesis: "*Remarques sur la chronologie*," &c.

tached by ancient authors to exactness in matter of dates and intervals. "Sometimes," remarks the same writer just quoted, "wishing to give a round number, they put down positively what they only knew approximatively. It scarcely ever happens that either the Scriptures or the profane historians give the half year, or any broken number; which gives rise to the supposition that they have only too often left years behind unconnected, or else given more than should be, and that thus in matter of chronology it is next to impossible to arrive ever at any perfect precision."

Even if we suppose that the authors of the Old Testament Scriptures had originally so marked the time as to afford all the materials necessary to form in our day a complete chronological chart of sacred history, the present confusion would not be so very unaccountable. Nothing in literature is more liable to perversion than numbers, for the reason that they are generally expressed by arbitrary signs, which signs differ with different ages, countries, and languages, and are easily mistaken by copyists and translators. In commenting on the discrepancies between the different versions, Prichard says: "It is obvious that all these sets of dates except one must be wrong; and we may consider it as almost certain that the discrepancies have been introduced by mistake, and that the original expressions denoting numbers were not understood. This can be imagined on one hypothesis, viz.: that the most ancient copies of Genesis, or at least of these particular documents, contained in the several sections not the sums of years expressed in words, but some numerical marks, the real force of which had been lost in the lapse of time, and through various accidents, and that attempts were made at later but different times, and by various persons, to convert the numbers marked down by numerical signs

into words. \* \* \* If this supposition is allowed, it will afford a probable solution of many difficulties, and in the first place it reduces the preternatural length of antediluvian life within bounds compatible with the present constitution of nature. It may be supposed that the scribes who originally translated numerical signs into numbers expressed by words in the tables of Patriarchs, adopted some erroneous principle of interpretation, which greatly augmented the numbers originally denoted by those signs.”<sup>1</sup>

Another source of difficulties in the science of chronology, adverted to by Calmet in the same connection with the passage already cited, is the different methods of dividing time among different nations. “Some nations have made their years of one month, others of four, others of six. Some have made one year of the summer and another of the winter; some have made their year of ten months, others of twelve. Historians (and we may say the same of transcribers and translators) have often confounded all these years, and without remarking the difference of the years of the nations they were speaking of from those in usage in their own country, they have fixed the times by equivocal marks, and thus introduced confusion into chronology and history.”

There are writers even, and these among the warm friends of sacred revelation, who find no difficulty in the supposition that the chronological discrepancies which appear in the Old Testament Scriptures as we possess them now, may have originated with the sacred authors themselves, the inspiration and safe-guidance of the Holy Ghost not extending, as they think, and as we have already argued, to matters which have no connection, either es-

<sup>1</sup> Researches into the Physical History of Mankind. Vol. v, note on Bibl. Chronol. at the end.



entially or influentially, with religious truth. "We are convinced," says M. Lenormant, "that religious truth is far from being tied to questions of literature or of chronology. Christian faith no more reposes upon the chronology of Genesis, than upon its physics and its astronomy."<sup>1</sup>

After acknowledging the difficulty of harmonizing the received system of chronology either with ancient profane history, or with the results of his own researches into the physical history of man, Prichard proceeds to state his own method of reconciliation, which recognizes several centuries—perhaps one or two thousand years—as having intervened between the deluge of Noe and the origin of the great Asiatic monarchies. This method simply admits "that the Biblical writers had no revelation on the subject of chronology, but computed the succession of times from such data as were accessible to them. The duration of time, unless in so far as the knowledge of it was requisite for understanding the Divine Dispensation, was not a matter on which supernatural light was afforded; nor was this more likely than that the facts connected with physical science should have been revealed. By some it will be objected to the conclusions at which I have arrived, that there exists, according to my hypothesis, no chronology, properly so termed, of the earliest ages, and that no means are to be found for ascertaining the real age of the world. This I am prepared to admit, and I observe that the ancient Hebrews seem to have been of the same opinion, since the Scriptural writers have always avoided the attempt to compute the period in question."<sup>2</sup>

In fine, however the thing is to be accounted for, we cannot frame any reliable system of chronology from the

<sup>1</sup> Cours d'Histoire Ancienne. Paris, 1838, p. 122.

<sup>2</sup> Researches into the Physical History of Mankind. Ibid. ut supra.

sacred Scriptures for the earlier epochs. The Hebrew Bible and the Septuagint differ widely in their dates, nor does either version harmonize throughout with itself in this respect. The date of Man's advent into the world may be stated as beyond all reach of reasonable conjecture :

“ It fell in the ancient periods,  
Which the brooding soul surveys,  
Or ever the wild Time coined itself  
Into calendar months and days.”

It is doubtful if we can even approximate to the true period of the Flood. This we say independently of all Egyptian discoveries in chronology ; from those discoveries the biblical scholar can have nothing to fear, although possibly something to hope for, since all light thrown upon the early ages will serve to illustrate his studies.

As regards the computations of Egyptian chronology by Bunsen, Lepsius, and others, we cannot pretend to say how far confidence may be placed in them. We are not sufficiently instructed to have any decided opinion on the subject. It seems to be the growing if not prevailing opinion that they are substantially correct, but it is disputed by good authorities, and the whole subject of Egyptian antiquities remains still in great obscurity. It is still in dispute how far the different dynasties must be considered as consecutive, since contemporary kings were sometimes reigning in different parts of Egypt ; and we know that, in our own day, names of those who never reigned are counted into the royal lines,—witness for example Napoleon II. This department of science is, however, in able hands ; every year brings newer light, and I see no reason why the friends of Revelation should be reluctant to admit any antiquity ascribed to the Egyptian monarchy, even that of Lepsius, which is the highest, as soon as the Egyptian scholars shall come to an accord among them-

selves. The student of sacred literature ought to hail every additional ray of light elicited from the monuments of profane antiquity with a welcome. That ray cannot harm the science he loves best, for truth fears nothing but the dark ; light, from whatever quarter it comes, can only serve to illustrate and adorn it.

Yet, after all, it is the wise man's part to tread warily and humbly in the ways of science. All knowledge, whether sacred or profane, comes to us in fragments, and although all truths must necessarily connect somewhere and harmonize, we never know them all, nor even any two of them in their full harmony. Even the broad daylight brings its shadows. The sun illumines only one hemisphere at a time, and as it travels seemingly from east to west, every object it shines upon lies half in light and half in shade. So is it with human science ; so is it with revealed religion. There is a wise providence in this. It constitutes the beauty of earth, whatever may be the glory of heaven ; and the Christian poet sings well—

“There are no shadows where there is no sun,  
 There is no beauty where there is no shade ;  
 And all things in two lines of glory run,  
 Darkness and light, ebon and gold inlaid.  
 God comes among us through the shroud of air,  
 And his dim track is like the silvery wake  
 Left by yon pinnacle on the mountain lake,  
 Fading and reappearing here and there.”

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### CONSANGUINITY OF THE HUMAN RACE.

"To him who gives us each full leave  
(His pedigree amended)  
To choose a private Adam and Eve  
From whom to be descended."

LOWELL.

THE above toast was given at the birthday festival of a great naturalist. The sincere Christian, although his admiration for learning and genius may be equal to the poet's, will hesitate before he accepts this privilege to amend his pedigree. That pedigree seems to him too much inwoven with his faith to be easily relinquished. If we are not all descended from the same Adam, he will argue, then we have no part in Adam's sin; then we cannot say with the old primer,

"In Adam's fall  
We sinned all,"

since none can be partakers of Adam's sin but such as held a germ of existence in Adam's nature, being inheritors from him by natural propagation. With the doctrine of original sin falls also that of the necessity of a Redeemer for all, and, with the grand scheme of the redemption, the whole fabric of the Christian faith.

It may be said, in avoidance of this conclusion, that the history of our first parents and their fall, is only a sacred allegory; that Adam is an ideal character personifying

the whole human genus, and representing the universal lapse of the primitive world into sin; and that thus our belief in man's fallen nature, and all the great doctrines which dovetail into this, remain unassailed. Cardinal Cajetan considered the history of the Serpent and his temptation of Eve to be an allegory, and was never censured for his opinion. It is but one step further to extend the allegory to the whole history of Eden. We are aware that this supposition does not exclude the unity of the human race as one *species*, nor the manhood of Jesus, and therefore we dare not take upon ourselves to say that it of necessity involves any heresy; but at the same time we confess that any hypothesis which denies that the Saviour of the world is linked by lineage and the strict ties of blood with the whole human race, is one against which all our own religious feelings rise in revolt. Happily, however, it is not necessary to enter upon any discussion of such a question here. Human science, thus far, has discovered nothing inconsistent with the fact that all men, of every race and color, are descended from a single pair. All men are brothers. We may hold to all that science has established, and yet understand the language of St. Paul in its simplest and grandest sense: "God hath made of one all mankind, to dwell upon the whole face of the earth."

If we look either at the traditional belief of mankind or the judgment of great names in science, almost all the authority is with us upon this question. Our adversaries feel this, and endeavor to avoid the disadvantage by professing themselves the pioneers of a new school, which is destined to supersede the old. Thus, Dr. Nott, one of the confederate authors of "Types of Mankind," writes as follows in the Introduction to that work:

"The whole method of treating the subject is herein

changed. To our point of view, most that has been written on human Natural History becomes obsolete; and therefore we have not burdened our pages with citations from authors, even the most erudite and respected,<sup>1</sup> *whose views we consider the present work to have, in the main, superseded.*"

This is modest certainly; but prudent men will prefer to wait until these new oracles shall have convinced those erudite and respected authors of our day whose views, taken collectively, pass for authority in science. Until then there is no occasion to be frightened.

Although the controversy has assumed some new features of late, the older and more familiar arguments are not abandoned. It is contended that the great diversity existing between the different races of men in form and color, as well as in mental capacity, are inconsistent with the idea of their belonging to one and the same species, or at least (the definition of a *species*<sup>2</sup> being also in controversy) that they can all be derived by descent from a

<sup>1</sup> And yet, while the editors do not appear to be original investigators in any department, the work is fairly crammed with quotations of opinions as well as of alleged facts. The brief contribution of Agassiz, from which we quote farther on, is, of course, valuable from its very origin, but cannot give tone to the general character of the volume, which is pert and gossipy. Neither will it add to the reputation of the book in noble minds, that much effort is apparent, here and there, to press science into the service of negro slavery.

<sup>2</sup> Species in zoology and botany have generally been understood to comprise "*all such individuals as resemble each other in every characteristic not subject to variation, but capable of uniform and permanent continuance by natural propagation.*" This is a good practical, working definition, though indeed it is rather a rule for the distinguishing of species than a definition of the thing itself. Prof. Morton briefly characterizes species as "*primordial organic forms,*" a very philosophical definition. We do not understand why it should be complained of by any who hold to the permanence of species, nor how it can be amended. This latter as a definition does not supersede the former as a practical rule.

single pair. The white man, the red man, and the black man cannot be of one blood.

We insist, in the outset, that it is unfair to argue solely from the *extreme* differences among men—between the most civilized classes of Europe, for example, and the most degraded tribe of negroes—overlooking that most significant fact that in the human race is found every gradation of form, color, and intelligence, passing from one extreme to the other by insensible degrees. “We cannot believe,” some say, “that the immortal Newton is of the same species with the Caffre and the Hottentot.” This argument is capable of a wider application than its propounders intend. The result would be very much the same if a comparison were instituted between Newton and some of the less fortunate specimens of his own countrymen. How grown men prattle sometimes! Naturalists are not accustomed to reason in this way. Let us take for an example what they tell us of that cosmopolite quadruped the wolf.

“In color it is white in the northern regions, and in the elevated countries on both continents. In the temperate latitudes of Europe and America it is gray. It is black in the south, as in Florida, Georgia, and Louisiana. In the western part of Missouri it is clouded, and has been named *Canis nubilus*. In Texas it is red. These varieties differ vastly in size, those of the North being nearly double the size of those of the South. They differ in the conformation of the head and the skull. In an examination to which we were invited of the wolves preserved in the British Museum, and those contained in the gardens and museum of the Zoological Society of London, all the naturalists present expressed their surprise and perplexity at the vast differences existing, not only in color, but in size, form, and skull, in different specimens—in cold cli-

mates their heads were broader and muzzles shorter than in those found farther South; still we found individuals which, like links in a chain, connected all these varieties so closely, that they could not be separated into different species. Thus naturalists, after an examination for two hundred years of all the varieties of the wolf, are obliged to admit that this wide-roaming animal, which changes its form and color at every remove to new regions, is one and the same species."

"The question now arises: Are all these strangely marked varieties permanent in certain regions where each propagates its own variety, and has done so from our earliest knowledge, but everywhere associating and multiplying with neighboring varieties, to be regarded as miraculous creations of separate species; or are we not able to trace all these variations to the original constitution of the wolf, adapting it to the various climates and situations in which it takes up its residence, and to its instinctive impulses to a wandering and migratory life? Are there any more distinctive marks in the skulls, in the colors, and in the habits of the varieties of man than are found in those of the wolves? And if not, what reasons can naturalists assign for admitting the races of wolves as mere varieties, and yet insisting that the races of men are distinct species?"<sup>1</sup>

It must be acknowledged that, in general, the excellence of a people in point of physical form and feature is in direct proportion with their intellectual and moral stature. It does not follow that the differences in races are therefore aboriginal. The types of mankind are capable of elevation and degeneration both in body and mind, and in the process, the spiritual invariably goes before the physical change. Thus, in relation to the tribes of Africa,

<sup>1</sup> J. Bachman. "Unity of the Human Race," ch. iv, p. 122.



Prichard affirms that their physical attributes have an evident relation to their moral and social condition, and to the different degrees of barbarism and civilization in which they live. Wherever the inhabitants have advanced in social condition, their physical character is found differing materially from the distinctly stamped Negro type. The Ashantees, Soulimas, and Dahomans serve as instances of this. The negroes of Gooba and Houssa, where a considerable degree of civilization has existed for a long time, are perhaps the handsomest race of true negroes upon the continent, rivalled only by the Jaleffes, who have been a completely civilized people since the time of the first discovery by the Portuguese.<sup>1</sup>

Again—who would conjecture, from appearances only, that the the Magyars, tall, straight, comely, courteous, and noble as we find them now, could be the descendants of those hideous Huns described by Roman authors, of which Attila was a type—shoulders broad, heads misshapen, noses flat, eyes deep-set and small—tawny savages, the accredited offspring of devils and witches?

As an instance of change of physical type for the worse, Hugh Miller gives the following: "On the plantation of Ulster, in 1611, and afterward on the success of the British against the rebels in 1641 and 1689," says a shrewd writer of the present day, himself an Irishman, "great multitudes of the native Irish were driven from Armagh and the south of Down into the mountainous tract extending from the Barony of Fleurs eastward to the sea; on the other side of the kingdom the same race were exposed to the worst effects of hunger and ignorance, the two great brutalizers of the human race. The descendants of these exiles are now distinguished physically by great degradation. They are remarkable for open projecting

<sup>1</sup> Cited in the New Amer. Cyclop. : Africa.

mouths, with prominent teeth and exposed gums; and their advancing cheek bones and depressed noses bear barbarism on their very front. In Sligo and northern Mayo the consequences of the two centuries of degradation and hardship exhibit themselves in the whole physical condition of the people, affecting not only the features but the frame. Five feet two inches on an average—pot-bellied, bow-legged, abortively featured, their clothing a wisp of rags—these spectres of a people that were once well-grown, able-bodied, and comely, stalk abroad into the daylight of civilization, the annual apparition of Irish ugliness and Irish want.”<sup>1</sup> If only two centuries of oppression and indigence are thus sufficient to change the characteristics of a noble type of manhood, and this can be done in Europe, and under the magnanimous beard of the British lion—what changes might not be effected by ages of social degradation in the wilds of Africa, or the lone islands of the ocean, combined with the various influences of food, soil, and climate?

This capacity for modification of form and character is by no means confined to the human species. All quadrupeds, birds, and plants possess it, and it probably extends throughout the whole range of animated nature. There seems to be a certain law of life, by which each species is allowed to vary (within fixed limits of course), and accommodate itself to any change of circumstances. These varieties embrace differences in size, shape and form of the skull, in color also from black to snowy white, and even in some slight degree in structure.

Thus, among quadrupeds, from one original species of the horse we have countless varieties—some white, some black, some bay, some large, some small. How unlike are the great horses of Flanders, London, and Pennsylvania to

<sup>1</sup> Test. of the Rocks, lect. vi, p. 272.

the Shetland pony, the English racer, and the Arabian! From one original species of cow have descended cattle of all sizes, and of every conformation of skull—long-horned, short-horned, and hornless, some with humps on their shoulders, some with pendulous ears like the Brahmin cow, some with manes, some of the size of a small elephant, and some little bigger than a large dog; and these are either black, red, brown, white, or spotted.

Who can count the varieties of the dog? Honest, faithful dog! His heart is ever the same, although change of circumstances will often make him change his size, his color, his hair, his skull, and even to some extent his instincts. The original type is uncertain, but all the races are generally attributed by naturalists to one species. The dogs themselves have not the slightest doubt on the subject, and all—

“Both mongrel, puppy, whelp and hound,  
And curs of low degree,”

whenever and wherever they meet—all readily accord the usual interchange of courtesies. They believe themselves to be of one brotherhood. The greatest living authority on the subject, next after the dogs, is Youatt, and he is entirely of their opinion. “It is probable,” he says, “that all dogs sprung from one common source, but climate, food, and cross breeding caused varieties of form, which suggested particular uses; and these being either designedly or accidentally perpetuated, the various breeds thus arose, and they have become numerous in proportion to the progress of civilization. Among the ruder or savage tribes they possess but one form.”<sup>1</sup>

“If space would permit,” says Bachman, “and we were not fearful of trespassing too much on the patience of our readers, we would show from the history of every

<sup>1</sup> Apud Bachman, opere citato, p. 132.

domesticated species of quadruped, or bird, that they all, without a solitary exception, have branched out into striking and multiplied varieties, and that these varieties have become more numerous and striking in proportion to their wide dispersion, and change of climate and habit.”<sup>1</sup>

“The varieties once formed remain permanent; other varieties may spring from them, but they do not return to their original forms.

“Such is the uniform process of nature in every one of her departments. There is not a solitary exception to this law, which, although it cannot be fully explained by any process of human reasoning, is established by the best of all arguments—the naked and undisguised facts,—attested by the experience of all who have closely investigated the operations of the laws of nature.”<sup>2</sup>

Our adversaries insist that this law of mutation in nature cannot serve to explain the great differences among the human races; for example, between the Negro and the Caucasian, because we find both types existing from a high antiquity. The thick lips, flat noses, woolly heads, and black complexion, which distinguish the African now, are found represented, they tell us, on very ancient monuments of Egypt—demonstrating that during some 3,400 years, as they compute,<sup>3</sup> the negro type has undergone no change; growing neither uglier nor lovelier. How much space, then, does the Mosaic history leave before that period, for the sun to tan their skin, and crisp their hair?

We answer: The time seems to us sufficient, if the thing could be done in that way. But it is not at all probable that the negro skin became black, or the hair crisp, by any such slow process. Our impression is that the first negro was born black, and that the first sun that

<sup>1</sup> Apud Bachman, opere citato, p. 136.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Types of Mankind, p. 255.

shone on his head found the wool there. The transition was made suddenly and secretly in the process of gestation. What follows must be our explanation and proof.

It is necessary to distinguish, in the negro type of man, between certain characteristics which are the evident marks of degradation, and others which are not. The thick, sensual lip, the projecting jaw, the retreating forehead, and some other like features of organization are, at very sight, associated in the mind with a low state of intellect and morals, and must, in our judgment, be attributed to the slow and steady operation of that cause. It is well to observe, in passing, that these features are not characteristic of all the negro races, nor are they confined to Africans alone. It is only in particular combinations and proportions, that they characterize any type of humanity whatsoever.

Other slighter peculiarities of race are doubtless gradually introduced among men by change of air, temperature, food, and habits. The most civilized nations of the earth differ from each other in physical appearance, and the difference is sufficiently marked when they are clearly derived from the same stock, and this even although the separation is comparatively recent. It is generally not difficult to distinguish an Englishman from a New-Englander or a Virginian.

It appears to us highly improbable, however, that the remarkable differences existing in color, or even in the texture of the hair, can have been produced by any such gradual processes as these. We can account for these things in a better way. Nature does not always work gradually and openly. Sometimes—slowly, secretly, stealthily, imperceptibly gathering her energies together—she springs forward to her purpose at last by a single bound. New varieties among plants and animals frequently spring up without any cross breeding, and the thing is done in this

sudden way. The first of the new race are born in the new fashion, from parents of the old type, and a variety is thus formed which will become permanent, if not mingled with other breeds. Dr. Bachman gives numerous examples of this. We have room for a few only.

"The little Guinea pig, which, in its wild state in South America, is of a dingy reddish-gray color, has by domestication varied much in size and form, and become of all colors; it being usually seen with large irregular patches of red, yellow, and black.

"The common Barbary dove, that has but recently been domesticated, and is reared in cages, is fast varying from its original pale fawn-color, with a ring around its neck. There is now a permanent breed that is pure white, and we have seen others nearly black. The little Canary bird is advertised for sale by bird fanciers under twenty-nine distinct varieties.<sup>1</sup> Even the gold fish of China, which has become naturalized in the small ponds of Europe and America, has greatly varied in size, form, and color; we have seen some nearly a foot in length, whilst others which we kept in glass globes for years did not exceed four inches; some are white, and are called silver fish, and others are spotted with yellow, white, and black."<sup>2</sup>

There is, it seems, in the nature of animals, a certain force, or susceptibility, by which, within certain limits fixed by their Creator, they can undergo modifications of form and color. There is doubtless some wise provision in it to aid them in the struggle of life, to adapt them to new circumstances, new necessities, to changes of food and climate. Why should man be an exception? Why

<sup>1</sup> The newspapers of 1859 reported a jet black Canary, in the town of Bradford, England. See *Troy Times*, March 30.

<sup>2</sup> "Unity of the Race," chap. v, p. 136.

may not distinct varieties in the human family have sprung from a single species, or a single original pair? Is there any greater contrast in the complexions of the white, the red, and the negro races, than in the colors of the horse, the dog, the cow, the rabbit, the squirrel, the canary bird, the gold fish, and countless others? If these varieties are permanent when not crossed with other breeds, what wonder that the separated races of men should retain their characteristics for ages? What wonder—if we find the negro and other types of mankind depicted on the monuments of Egypt? If such varieties are sometimes produced suddenly in the process of gestation, and become rapidly multiplied, why may not the same thing have occurred ages ago in the human family before the pyramids were built? Was the world too young then? How much time do our opponents ask? We have seen that nature needs but little.

In truth, that such things may take place in the human species, is not a mere deduction from analogy, but proved by facts of actual occurrence in modern times. As an instance in point from our own continent, we copy the following from the same work of Dr. Bachman, already quoted:

“We were recently informed by our old and long-tried friend, the Hon. Joel R. Poinsett, that a race of spotted men existed in Mexico. He kindly gave us the following note: ‘Saw in the Capital of Mexico a regiment to the number of six hundred men, called *Los Pintados*, who were all spotted with blue spots in some parts of the body. These people are found along the Pacific coast just north of Acapulco. This regiment was commanded by Gen. Alvarez.’ These persons were all in fine health, and propagated the same variety from generation to generation. What there was in the food, the climate, or the geological

structure of the western coast of America to produce this strangely colored variety in the human species we are unable even to conjecture. It was certainly not disease, for Mr. Poinsett represents them as a regiment of fine, healthy-looking men, in which there was not a solitary individual who was not spotted in this manner. If our opponents, who are busily engaged in making new species of men, should on this hint begin to speculate on the position this new species of *Homo maculatus* should occupy in our nomenclature, we would just remind them that they have originated since the discovery of America, inasmuch as they are a mixture of Spanish and Indian blood.”<sup>1</sup> “We had often heard,” says the same author, “of the tall regiment composing the body guard of old Frederick of Prussia. They had been selected, by a whim of that monarch, from among the tallest individuals found in his dominions. In a recent visit to Potsdam we mingled among the descendants of these people, and almost fancied ourselves among a nation of giants.”<sup>2</sup>

Instances are numerous where malformations have been perpetuated for several generations, and would probably have become permanent had the individuals intermarried only among themselves.<sup>3</sup> This is answer enough to all that has been said of the peculiar hump of the Hottentot women, and like monstrosities.

A very direct argument to prove that all men are of one species is derived from a well known law of nature, which provides for the preservation of each species in its integrity. Hybrids, that is, animals or plants produced by the mixture of two species, are exceedingly rare, nature abhorring such unions; and when produced by human in-

<sup>1</sup> Chap. iv, p. 182. He cites also two papers by Mr. Poinsett in De Bow's Com. Review.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 186.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., ch. v.



terference, the misbegotten progeny cannot be perpetuated beyond the first, or at most the second generation. The advocates of a plurality of species in the human family have never been able to point out a single example of a new race established and perpetuated by hybrids, in any department of nature. Nevertheless, all the races of men produce prolific offspring by intercommunication. For example—to choose among races the most widely differing—Maltebrun, in his *Universal Geography*, speaking of the Portuguese in Africa, says: “The Rio South branch is inhabited by the Maloes, a negro race so completely mingled with the descendants of the original Portuguese as not to be distinguished from them.” The mixed races of African and Spanish or Portuguese, Spanish and Indian blood in America, are well known. This law of hybrid infertility is a lion in the way of our antagonists, especially on this side the ocean. They themselves have introduced the new definition of species—“*primordial organic forms*,” to which we do not object. By denying the infertility of hybrids they would admit the inconstancy of species, and thus destroy their own definition; by admitting the law, the unity of the human species is established.

It is well to notice here that the question of the specific unity of the human race is not the same as that of the common origin of all men from a single pair of progenitors.<sup>1</sup> If all men are derived from common parents, they must

<sup>1</sup> In quoting authorities, one must keep this distinction carefully in view. Humboldt and Agassiz may be cited in favor of the unity of mankind as *one species*, as well as Owen, Lyell, Prichard, Lichtenstein, Bunsen, Lepsius, Max Müller, and many other celebrated names. Of these, however, Agassiz is strongly opposed to the consanguinity of the different races. Alexander Humboldt hesitated to express an opinion, and William Humboldt declared that whether the common and general traditions in favor of it are authentic, or not, was a question which could not be determined. See *Cosmos*, vol. i, p. 361-368; Bohn's ed.

belong to one species, but the converse of the proposition is not true. The human race might have been constituted by its Creator, had he so chosen, in one species, and yet many individuals of that species have been simultaneously created. Some of our opponents maintain alike the two propositions—that the distinct races of men are distinct in species, and that within the limits of each species men were created in nations, as were the bees in swarms.

And now let us pass on to another field of argument. It has been noticed in a previous chapter that animals are, for the most part, enclosed within natural geographical limits which voluntarily they never pass, and that as a general thing the creatures of different localities, separated by seas or high mountain ranges, or belonging to different climates, are specifically, if not generically distinct, the animals of each locality being peculiarly fitted for it by their organization and instinctive habits. This has led naturalists to the idea of mapping off the earth into certain provinces, so called, according to the geographical distribution of animals and plants upon its surface. It has induced them also to adopt very generally the theory that each and every species originated, or was created, within the limits of a single natural province, or, as they term it, in one specific centre.

Starting from this point, Prof. Agassiz, in his "Sketch of the Natural Provinces of the Animal World, and their Relation to the different Types of Man," has endeavored to show that "*the boundaries within which the different natural combinations of animals are known to be circumscribed upon the surface of the earth, coincide with the natural range of distinct types of man,*" and that by consequence the races of men have originated in separate and distinct centres of creation corresponding to the localities which they now inhabit, or where history finds them. We

cannot be expected to give in detail the facts upon which he bases this theory. The bearings of it are very manifest. If admitted, the consanguinity of the human kind must be denied.

These views, coming from so distinguished a source, will, no doubt, find their advocates among his disciples. They have not received the sanction of the scientific world, nor are they likely to receive it. It has not been proved, nor can it be, that the various types of men bear any fixed relations to distinct regions, map them out as you will. Agassiz divides the earth into eight zoological realms, with numerous minor subdivisions of provinces corresponding to distinct *fauna*. It is a new division of his own making,—not one of Nature's. That the beasts themselves range over his barriers without the slightest respect for the laws he has laid down, is easily shown. Two signal instances of this are—the common wolf, and the ermine. These are found existing in the whole of Europe and North America, and in different parts of Asia, the latter, indeed, throughout entire Asia north of the tropics.

"This extensive range," says Dr. Bachman, "of two of the most common species found in his *Arctic realm*, will cover all the ground assigned by Prof. Agassiz to every tribe, form of skull, and shade of color in his Arctic, Mongol, European, and American realms. Thus, if his doctrine of the diversity of the human species could be proved true, it would appear that man, endued with intelligence, possessing powers of invention, fond of navigation, omnivorous in his appetites, restless and migratory in his habits of locomotion, and subjecting the lower animals to his will, is restricted to a narrower range than the wolf, the ermine, and many others that might be named."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Charleston "Medical Journal and Review" for 1855, July number, cited by Cabell in his *Testimony of Science to the Unity of Mankind*,

Many other instances are given by the same author to demonstrate the purely arbitrary principles upon which definite limits have been assigned in this new system to the so-called Arctic realm.

"The very plant," says Prof. Cabell, "selected by Prof. Agassiz, as characterizing his Arctic realm, the reindeer moss, has a very extensive range in Asia, Europe, and America, having been found as far south as Virginia, and even in South Carolina. Now, the learned professor himself admits as many as thirteen distinct faunæ in his great American realm. We are at a loss to conceive why these faunæ should be associated in one great zoological province from which the Arctic fauna is excluded, seeing that so many of the species found in the latter range so extensively through the regions assigned to the former. Is it not apparent that the arrangement was forced upon him by the necessities of his system? He considered the Esquimaux as representing one primordial type of man, and the various tribes of American Indians as another; he

p. 189.—Dr. Bachman is the author of the valuable work on the Quadrupeds of America, illustrated by Audubon and his sons, and the associate of Audubon in the preparation of his great work on ornithology. He has been a thorn in the side of our new American school of theorizers by holding them down to facts. It may not be uninteresting to our readers to show how cautiously that same school is watched on the other side of the water. At the meeting of the British Association for the Promotion of Science, in Sept. 1859, Prof. Owen, on assuming the chair of the section on zoology, made some remarks on Agassiz's new work entitled *Contributions to the Natural History of the United States*, and the introductory *Essay on Classification*, from which we extract the following: "But while I thus praise the work, and the manner in which it is treated, and agree with a great many of the positions he has taken up, I must warn its readers that some subjects are treated in a way Prof. Agassiz will not be able to maintain; and that to those who are unable or unwilling to think for themselves, the author's reputation will prove a guarantee not altogether to be trusted. It must be studied with great care and caution."—*Annual of Scientific Discovery*, 1860. Notes by the editor.

had, therefore, to make two zoological realms in correspondence with the range of these two types of man. Now, we must insist that it is a glaring perversion of the simplest rules of logic, to think of establishing, by such a procedure as this, the proposition that 'the boundaries within which the different natural combinations of animals are *known to be circumscribed* upon the surface of our earth, coincide with the natural range of distinct types of man.' After all, it turns out that the boundaries are wholly arbitrary, and the provinces are constructed with the express view of being made to 'coincide' with the range, real or assumed, of the distinct types of man."<sup>1</sup>

The immediate inference which Prof. Agassiz draws from these ill-established premises is—"that the laws which regulate the diversity of animals, and their distribution upon earth, apply equally to man *within the same limits, and in the same degree.*"<sup>2</sup>

Now, according to our simple apprehension, the laws regulating the distribution of animals upon the earth must refer primarily to the means of subsistence. Those assigned, for instance, to the *Arctic realm* must be well provided by nature with warm winter clothing for the whole year; and they must have been so provided at the outset if created there. Did we find the Esquimaux described as covered by a thick coat of his own natural fur, or well lined with blubber under the skin, we might be staggered. When, however, we look at the tableau furnished by Prof. Agassiz to illustrate his theory, and see that Esquimaux head artificially hooded in a hide of fur, which God evidently made for a more Arctic creature than himself, we shake our head. It will not do. He manages, at present, to keep the blood in circulation with those borrowed gar-

<sup>1</sup> Unity of Mankind, part ii, ch. i, p. 191.

<sup>2</sup> Prov. of the Anim. World, &c. *In fine*.

ments, but how was it with the Esquimaux Adam in the beginning, while his Eve was occupied with her first tailoring? According to our philosophy, "the laws which regulate the diversity of animals and their distribution upon the earth," point most unmistakably to the inference that man was created under a warm sun. He could not, without more miracles than we need suppose, have begun his career *within the same limits* as the more characteristic fauna of the barren, dark, and icy regions of this Arctic realm of Agassiz. Such is also the conclusion of Pickering, in his work on the Races of Man: "Man does not belong to cold and variable climates; his original birth-place has been in a region of perpetual summer, where the unprotected skin bears without suffering the slightest fluctuations of temperature. He is, in fact, essentially a production of the tropics, and there has been a time when the human family had not strayed beyond these geographical limits."

For the rest, there was no need of making a separate zoological realm to suit the Esquimaux. Ethnologists class them either with the American Indians or (what is much the same thing) with the Mongols. Mr. Gallatin says—"There does not seem to be any solid foundation for the opinion of those who would ascribe to the Esquimaux an origin different from that of the North American Indians. The color and features are essentially the same, and the differences which exist, particularly in stature, may be easily accounted for by the rigor of the climate, and partly perhaps by the nature of their food."<sup>1</sup>

The conclusion is evident. If this new survey of the earth into eight zoological realms is purely arbitrary, and only made to accommodate a preconceived distribution of

<sup>1</sup> Synopsis of the Indian Tribes of North America. *Archæologia Americana*, vol. ii.

mankind ; if, moreover, the races of men themselves will not bear any such classification ; then the whole theory falls to the ground, no proof remains to show the origin of mankind in distinct centres of creation, and man remains—what he has always been thought to be—the unlimited lord of the earth, cosmopolite in his habits, and one in his origin. We think we have said enough to show that natural history does not range itself in opposition to our doctrine of the consanguinity of the human race.

One of the strongest proofs of an unity of origin in the human family is derived from what is called the “Comparative Study of Languages.” The history of this science in a popular form has been given, in two charming lectures, by Cardinal Wiseman, in his well-known work on the “Connexion between Science and Revealed Religion.” We shall merely attempt to state in a few words the practical results.

The fact that the different races of men are distinguished by different languages, which renders them ordinarily unintelligible to each other, would seem at first thought to favor a diversity of origin. But a careful comparison of these languages together has led to the contrary conclusion. It has developed an unsuspected bond of unity, existing between all the varieties of speech, and pointing manifestly back to a time when the nations of the earth were undivided, a single social group. Thus, the Sanscrit, ancient and sacred language of Hindostan, with the vernacular dialects of the same country ; the Persian ; the Teutonic, with its various dialects, Sclavonian, Greek, and Latin, including also our own English, as well as the Celtic—all these are found to have a decided affinity, and compose one great family of languages, the *Indo-European*, so called. In like manner other family groups are formed : the *Semitic* comprising the Hebrew, Syro-Chaldaic, Arabic,

and Abyssinian; the *Indo-Chinese*, the *Malay* or *Polynesian*, the *African*, the *American*, and as many more great families or stocks, with their subordinate dialects.<sup>1</sup>

Again—affinities are found connecting these different families. For instance, the Hebrew and the Sanscrit, dialects of distinct families, the Semitic and Indo-European, are found to be akin, while the ancient Egyptian, formerly considered an entirely insulated language, is proved by Lepsius to connect with both.<sup>2</sup> The dialects of the different Indian tribes of America are not only linked together by a strong family likeness, but present a remarkable affinity with different languages of Europe and eastern Asia, and even with the Coptic and that of the Congo Negroes in Africa.<sup>3</sup> Upon the same ground of resemblance of language, Prichard is led to “infer without doubt the common origin of the Polynesian Islanders, and that of the Greeks and Germans, and the Arian race of Hindostan.”<sup>4</sup> Thus the *Malayan* is also introduced into the great circle of allied families; and so on with the rest.

The conclusion is obvious. The nations that speak these kindred tongues are akin to each other. “The evidence of language,” says Dr. Max Müller, “is irrefragable, and it is the only evidence worth listening to with regard to ante-historical periods. It would have been next to impossible to discover any traces of relationship between the swarthy nations of India and their conquerors, whether

<sup>1</sup> They are all enumerated in the *New Amer. Cyclop.* : “Language.”

<sup>2</sup> Wiseman. Lect. ii, on Science and Rev. Rel.

<sup>3</sup> Humboldt. *Views of the Cordilleras*, cited by Wiseman. The American dialects seem more especially allied to those of the *Turanian*, sometimes called the *Tartar* family, which fact, taken together with a comparison of their traditions and customs, enabled Bunsen to assert “that the Asiatic origin of all these tribes is as fully proved as the unity of family among themselves.”—BUNSEN’S *Christianity and Mankind*, vol. iv, cited by Cabell.

<sup>4</sup> Report of the Brit. Assoc. for the Advancement of Science, cited by the same author.



Alexander or Clive, but for the testimony borne by language. What authority would have been strong enough to persuade the Grecian army that their gods and their hero ancestors were the same as those of King Porus, to convince the English soldier that the same blood was running in his veins and in those of the dark Bengalee? And yet there is not an English jury nowadays which, after examining the hoary documents of language, would reject the claim of a common descent and a relationship between Hindu, Greek, and Teuton. Many words still live in India, and in England, that have witnessed the first separation of the northern and southern members of the Arian family; and these are witnesses not to be shaken by any cross-examination. The terms for God, for house, for father, mother, son, daughter, for dog and cow, for heart and tears, for axe and tree—*identical in all the European idioms*—are like the watchwords of soldiers. We challenge the seeming stranger; and whether he answer with the lips of a Greek, a German, or an Indian, we recognize him as one of ourselves. Though the historian may shake his head, though the physiologist may doubt, and the poet scorn the idea, all must yield before the fact furnished by language.”<sup>1</sup>

It must not be thought that these affinities of language are made out by mere fanciful derivations of words or accidental resemblances. They have been established by philologers of the newest and severest school—the critical, so called. “That school,” says Bunsen, “demands the strictest proof that these affinities are neither accidental, nor merely ideal, but essential; that they are not the work of extraneous intrusion, but indigenous, as running through the whole original texture of the languages, compared according to a traceable rule of analogy. The very

<sup>1</sup> Apud Cabell, p. 222.

method of this critical school excludes the possibility of accidental or merely ideal analogies being taken for proofs of a common historical descent of different tribes or nations.”<sup>1</sup>

Here then, drawn from the very heart of this interesting science, we have, if we may trust its master minds, a corroboration of the truth of that Scripture history which represents mankind as originating from one original stock. All the languages of the earth are but ramifications of one original tongue, and consequently all the tribes of the earth derive their origin from one original society of men who spoke once that tongue together.

The adversaries of the doctrine of unity are not yet disposed to leave us the last word. But what will they reply? The incredulous naturalist, what does he say? Does he deny that these affinities exist? No; but he denies the conclusion.

“The evidence adduced from the affinities of the languages of different nations in favor of a community of origin,” says Agassiz, “is of no value, when we know that, among vociferous animals, every species has its peculiar intonations, and that the different species of the same family produce sound as closely allied, and forming as natural combinations as the so-called Indo-Germanic languages compared with one another. Nobody, for instance, would suppose that, because the notes of the different species of thrushes inhabiting different parts of the world, bear the closest affinity to one another, these birds must all have a common origin; and yet, with reference to man, philologists still look upon the affinities of languages as affording direct evidence of such a community of origin among the races, even though they have already discov-

<sup>1</sup> Cited by Cabell, p. 226.

ered the most essential differences in the very structure of these languages." <sup>1</sup>

Is this good argument? So far as inarticulate sounds are concerned, analogies may be instituted between notes of birds and human voices. But inarticulate sounds are scarcely to be considered as elements of language. Men without speech would, we suppose, cry alike and laugh alike, enough so to be recognized as human. They would give vent to very similar sounds if they were tickled, frightened, or had their toes trodden upon. Doubtless also certain tones correspond with certain feelings of the heart, and upon this correspondence is based in good part the power of music. And here the analogy ceases.

Men must use sounds to represent natural objects, if they speak at all; but unless by agreement, or that they derive their words from a common source, or borrow them out of each other's vocabularies, it is not in the nature of things that, out of thousands of possible combinations of sound, they should fall upon the same words to signify the same things. And the same must be said when we pass from primitive words to compounds and derivatives, to the methods of declension and comparison, the formation of genders numbers, voices, moods, and tenses, and the construction of sentences. Grammar has, no doubt, its fixed, natural, and necessary elements, but its limits of possible variation are also vast. Languages deriving from a common stock must betray themselves by parallels too remarkable, too frequent, and too consecutive to be attributed either to chance or nature. These coincidences will not be accounted for by a cast of double sixes, or by listening to a concert of thrushes.

But on what do these differences and resemblances in language depend? Have they any connection with the

<sup>1</sup> Natural Provinces of the Animal World, &c.

color of the skin, the shape of the skull, the projection of the jaw? Are they determined by any peculiarities of the tongue, the throat, the larynx? It cannot be pretended. Children can be trained equally well to any language. Nature is indifferent to them all.

Prof. Agassiz would have us notice that there exist essential differences as well as affinities in the structure of these languages. The force of the objection is not very apparent. It would be wonderful indeed if isolated nations should by chance adopt the same words for the same objects, and precisely the same methods of compounding, combining, inflecting, and augmenting words; but it would be no marvel whatever if two dialects of a language should in the lapse of time arrive at any kind or degree of difference. These affinities, and these differences also, are explained well enough by accepting the solution offered us in the Book of Genesis. We will not stop to inquire whether the account there given of the Tower of Babel is strictly and literally a history, or only a traditional truth clothed in allegory. The substance of that account is this: There was a time when all mankind were of one tongue and the same speech, and clustered into one locality; but, under the disposition of God's providence, they were dispersed abroad throughout the earth, and a confusion of languages introduced. That this confusion has become so great is no wonder, when we remember what ages of dim history lie behind us. That it is no greater must be attributed chiefly to the fact that man's existence on the earth is not still more ancient. At all events, the actual state of the different languages contributes to one happy result, in the means it affords us to defend God's holy Word, by opposing human science to those who acknowledge no other authority.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### THE ANTIQUITY OF MAN.

"And once again,  
O'er the grave of men,  
We shall talk to each other again  
Of the old age behind,  
Of the time out of mind."

EMERSON.

THE adversaries of that consanguinity of mankind for which we contend raise another difficulty, which is, to our mind, rather a perplexity of science than a formidable objection to the divine record. We have seen already that the old monuments of Egypt, with all the various types they show of ancient races, are not old enough to establish any aboriginal distinctions among men. But there are mummies of nature's own embalming; human bones, and remains of human art, are sometimes found buried in the earth by natural causes and converted into stone, or otherwise preserved from decay. We have seen what fossil creatures are found naturally entombed in the rocks—creatures of strange forms unknown to our actual living world, and we have seen how these bear proof of the earth's vast antiquity. If fossil men too should be found, with signs of man's handiwork associated with these in such a way that they must have lived contemporaneously—our opponents say it is so—what then? Why, this would prove nothing directly against the unity of the race; but it would create a new difficulty, it is thought, in sustaining

the authority of the Book of Genesis. It would show (so they argue) that men were living upon this earth of ours long before the time of Adam, who is nevertheless represented in Genesis as the first of all. Let us see first what science has to say on this subject. When we are in full possession of the difficulty, it will be time enough to find a key for it.

Among all the more ancient rocks no remains of man are found. This is beyond dispute. They are nevertheless sometimes found in deposits of lava, in peat mosses, and in alluvial soils many feet below the surface. This fact alone proves nothing in our question. The recent origin of many of these bogs of peat is certain,<sup>1</sup> and the deep burying of the bodies and habitations of men by floods, torrents, and inundations, and by volcanic eruptions, are also constant events of modern history. Petrified human bones have also been found in European caves, buried up and cemented together with the remains of bears, hyenas, elephants, and other animals, some of them no longer existing in those regions. The juxtaposition of these human and animal bones has been urged as an argument to prove the coexistence of man with extinct animals in ages long anterior to Adam.

Before our adversaries can make anything out of these facts, it is necessary to discover how long it is since the animals in question *became extinct*. They are the very

<sup>1</sup> "In the Hatfield moss, Yorkshire, and in that of Kincardine in Scotland, and several others, Roman roads have been found covered to the depth of eight feet by peat. All the coins, axes, arms, and other utensils found in British and French mosses are also Roman; so that a considerable portion of the peat in European peat-bogs is evidently not more ancient than the age of Julius Cæsar. De Luc ascertained that the very sites of the aboriginal forests of Hercinia, Semana, Ardennes, and several others are now occupied by mosses and fens."—LYELL'S *Princ.*, ch. xlv, p. 721.

latest of extinct forms, and unless we suppose the earth to have been left uninhabited for a time, they must have connected with and overlapped the present creation, coexisting to some extent with animals now living. We do not remember to have found, in the course of our reading, any reason why the elephant and other animals of types now found only in the tropics may not have existed in Europe and America at a comparatively recent period, the face of these countries then being precisely what it is now. These animals could easily exist in a cold climate, if we suppose them covered with hair or fur, and to have the benefit of as much vegetation as they actually find in the African deserts where huge elephants and rhinoceroses now abound. In point of fact the Siberian elephants or mammoths were covered with hair. One specimen, which fortunately was found in full form and flesh, preserved from decay by being imbedded in the ice, had its skin protected by three coats; covered first by black bristles, thicker than horse-hair, and twelve to sixteen inches in length; secondly, hair about four inches long, and thirdly, wool or fur. Upwards of thirty pounds of the fur were collected. A Siberian rhinoceros, in the same state of preservation, was also covered with long hairs.<sup>1</sup> In the Kentucky licks, mammoths are found in an erect posture, and evidently mired in the same morasses where stray cattle mire themselves in our day. Now, be it remembered, the question is not how long ago some such creatures may have been living, but at what period did the race become extinct. Can we say with any certainty that none such were existing in Europe three thousand years ago, and hunted to death as men now hunt the buffaloes of the West, which are on the high road to extinction? Our historical knowl-

<sup>1</sup> Mantell's Wonders of Geology, lect. ii. Lyell's Principles, ch. vi.

edge of Europe goes back but little beyond the Christian era.

But again, supposing it certain that these creatures became extinct long ages ago, the juxtaposition of their bones with human remains in the caverns does not prove that they lived contemporaneously, as all the leading geologists have agreed. After arguing this question at length, Sir Charles Lyell sums up as follows :

“As many of these caverns may have served in succession as temples, and habitations, as places of sepulture, concealment, or defence, it is easy to conceive that human bones, and those of animals in osseous breccias of much older date, may have been swept away together by inundations, and then buried in one promiscuous heap.

“It is not on the evidence of such intermixtures that we ought readily to admit either the high antiquity of the human race, or the recent date of certain lost species of quadrupeds.”<sup>1</sup>

Undoubtedly the author just cited does not say positively that these human remains are not very ancient, not so ancient as the associated remains of extinct animals, but simply that the facts alleged do not afford any sufficient proof of it. It cannot therefore be considered as an inconsistency, when we find him recently declaring his opinion that, in one case, proof is afforded of the former co-existence of man in Europe with extinct species of the elephant, and that he is therefore less disposed to be skeptical in regard to the antiquity of the human remains discovered in the caves. Hatchets, spear heads, and wedges of flint have been discovered in great number in gravel pits at Abbeville and Amiens, in the north of France, associated with the bones of elephants, and as he thinks of the same age. “Although,” he says, “the accompanying shells are

<sup>1</sup> *Princ. of Geol.*, ch. xlv, p. 740.



of living species, I believe the antiquity of the Abbeville and Amiens flint instruments to be great indeed, if compared to the times of history or tradition." <sup>1</sup> How ancient he does not attempt to tell us in numbers, but he evidently contemplates an antiquity far higher than any of us have ever attributed hitherto to man.

It would be difficult for one not acquainted with the locality to discuss the merits of this particular case, even if otherwise competent, which we do not profess to be. Mr. Lyell's authority is perhaps as good as any single authority, but we can afford, now as heretofore, to wait for the decision of the scientific world, without fearing that the monuments of our faith may suffer anything by the result. Science often shows a false glimmer at first, even when just upon the point of revealing some great truth, and they are not the wisest who are always the quickest to stand as godfathers to new opinions :

"For gentle Nature plays her part  
With ever-varying wiles,  
And transient feignings with plain truths  
So well she reconciles,  
That those fond idlers most are pleased  
Whom oftenest she beguiles."

Several other alleged instances, which gained some credit at first, have since been repudiated by science. The human footprints in a rock at St. Louis have turned out to be Indian carvings, as broad a joke as the unlady-like mummy which Gliddon introduced to the Bostonians for a princess, or the sculptured representations of Adam and Eve found under the roots of an oak at Brownsville, which the French missionaries tell of. The skeletons found imbedded in the rock on the sea beach of Guadeloupe no longer excite any wonder. The whole rock is a

<sup>1</sup> Annual of Scientific Discovery, for 1860. Notes by the editor.

sort of compost of coral reef and sand, such as is daily forming, and the bodies were probably buried in the beach within a few hundred years past, and petrified by the same process that cemented the whole. The human pelvis found at Natches was an imposition from the beginning. It was picked up in the bed of a stream, and attributed by surmise to an inferior formation in the cliffs; although it might as well have been washed out from some grave near the top, and to this origin Sir Charles Lyell attributed it on examining the spot and the testimony. "The case of Prof. Agassiz' fossil man of Florida," says Cabell, "meets with no better acceptance among geologists, to say nothing of Dr. Dowler's sub-cypress Indian disinterred at New Orleans."<sup>1</sup>

Much interest has been excited among archæologists by recent discoveries in different parts of Europe, and especially in Switzerland, to which we are indebted for the revelation of two distinct and successive races of men that must have inhabited the lake shores before the earliest races made known to us by European history. Before the Celts, whose early manners and customs are made known to us through Roman literature, and who made use of *iron* as weapons of war and for domestic purposes, there lived a race of men whose implements were of *bronze*; and these were preceded again by another race, whose hatchets, hammers, arrow heads, and coffins were of *stone*. Both these races erected their dwellings upon piles standing in the water near the lake shores, and these piles, with the relics dug up from the lake bottom, reveal to us what we know of the history and habits of these lacustrine villagers. "The precise date of the pile buildings," writes a contributor to the New American Cyclopædia, "must of course be a subject of conjecture, but the Swiss archæolo-

<sup>1</sup> Unity of Mankind, p. 272.

gists have made a very ingenious attempt to estimate it. The torrent of the Tinière, at the point where it falls into the Lake of Geneva, near Villeneuve, has gradually raised up a cone of gravel and alluvium. In building a railway, this cone has been bisected and found very regular in structure, with three layers of vegetable soil running through it, each of which must at one time have formed the surface of the cone. These layers are respectively 4 feet, 10 feet, and 19 feet below the present surface. By means of relics found in them, the first or uppermost layer is ascertained to belong to the Roman period, the second to the 'age of bronze,' and the third to the 'age of stone.' Now, allowing something for certain known disturbing causes in the formation of the cone, and assigning to the Roman layer an age of 16 centuries, we have for the bronze age an antiquity of 3,800 years, and for that of stone, 6,400 years."<sup>1</sup>

There is nothing formidable in this antiquity, any more than we have seen in the antiquities of Egypt. Bones of the *Aurochs* and *Wild Bull* have been found in these lacustrine ruins, and as they were undoubtedly contemporary in Europe with the extinct Elephant and Mastodon, it is possible that these latter animals were also still existing in the "Age of Stone" within times fairly embraced even by Hebrew chronology. Among the foremost investigators into this question of the occurrence of human relics with the bones of extinct animals is Prestwich. "The evidence, as it at present stands," he concludes,<sup>2</sup> "does not seem to me to necessitate the carrying of Man back in past time, so much as the bringing forward of the extinct animals towards our own time; my own previous opinion, founded on an independent study of the superficial drift, or

<sup>1</sup> New Amer. Cyclo., vol. xvi. "Lake Dwellings," in the Appendix.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Dana. Manual of Geology, p. 582.

Pleistocene (Post-tertiary) deposits having likewise been certainly in favor of this view." Hereafter, then, we must not be surprised at finding in the rocks these same bedfellows, and the true epoch both of man and beast must be decided by more trustworthy indications. We may listen with respectful attention to Sir Charles Lyell while he reasons upon the antiquity of the flint instruments at Amiens and Abbeville upon geological grounds, but we cannot agree with him when he says that "the disappearance of the elephant, rhinoceros, and other genera of quadrupeds now foreign to Europe, implies, in like manner, a vast lapse of ages, separating the era in which the fossil implements were framed, and that of the invasion of Gaul by the Romans."<sup>1</sup>

But let us suppose that future investigations should establish, beyond all reasonable bounds of doubt, an antiquity to the human race as remote as the largest conjecture that has ever been advanced,—what then? Why then the worst conclusion that can be drawn against the Bible is that its chronology is wrong. It must be remembered, however, that we have already declared our conviction that the Old Testament contains no data upon which a reliable chronology of the primitive ages can be founded, and we have given our reasons. Biblical students have often occupied themselves in framing chronologies of the world from Adam down, although it was evident from the very record upon which they drew, that their systems could only be guesswork. The genealogical lists of the Bible sometimes pass over generations without mention, which lapses we are able to detect from other parts of the record. It may fairly be supposed that others occur which we cannot detect, especially in the earlier and more meagre parts of sacred history, where, for aught we know, the

<sup>1</sup> Annual of Scientific Discovery, for 1860.

leaps may be immense. There is also a great confusion in the numbers, as chronologists have always confessed. What wonder, in records so old ! Besides, it is by no means clear to our mind that the Prophet Moses himself had, or professed to have, in his day, any such chronological knowledge of the primitive world, that he could have measured out in exact numbers the distance from himself to Adam, or even to the flood. It is possible that some of the numbers attributed to him may have crept from the margin into the text, where no number was before. We doubt not that, fairly and generously interpreted, there is ample margin in the Book of Genesis to accommodate all the relics of mankind we know of, and all that remain to be discovered, although the deposits which cover these relics should require a thousand centuries to span them.

In this series of essays, which now come to a close, we have treated of many very difficult questions, on which wise and holy men have differed, and still differ ; but not, as we trust, with any arrogance. Although in matters of science and theological opinion we have used our liberty, on the consecrated ground of faith we have not ventured in anything to walk by our own light, nor would we in any minor matter dictate any opinion to the humblest of our fellow Christians. We delight in this respect to borrow the words of Mother Juliana, a holy anchorite, that lived and wrote in England many centuries ago :

“ I am sure there be many that never had shewing ne sight but of the common teaching of Holy Church that love God better than I ; for, if I look singularly to myself, I am right nought ; but in general I am, I hope, in onehead of charity with all my even Christian ; for in this onehead standeth the life of all mankind that shall be

saved ; for God is all that is good, as to my sight. And in all things I believe as Holy Church preacheth and teacheth ; for the faith of Holy Church which I had beforehand understanding, and as I hope, by the grace of God, wilfully keep it in use and custome, stood continually in my sight, willing and meaning never to receive anything that might be contrary thereto."

May God accept this humble offering which we lay at the foot of His altar ! For the honor of His holy Word, and for no other end, have we wandered beyond the natural bounds of our own profession, to study the rocks, and the hills, and the denizens of the wild woods, or stood gazing up into the eyes of the night, to question the stars of heaven. Were it not for this ruling motive, we should not have sacrificed our leisure hours, scanty enough at all times, in bending over books and manuscripts when fainting head and aching eyes murmured for the fresh air. The subject of our studies would have harmonized better with the sad sweetness of those lines of Manrique—we solicit pardon for a slight alteration—

"Little avails it now to know  
Of ages past so long ago,  
Nor how they rolled ;  
Our theme should be the present day,  
Which to oblivion sweeps away  
Like days of old."

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### THE CONCLUSION.

"All's well that ends well."

SHAKESPEARE.

SEVERAL weeks had glided by since the reading of the essay contained in the last chapter, when Susy Brinn came bursting into my study one morning, her face all flushed with excitement, and her eyes glistening like twin stars.

"What's in the wind now?" said I.

But she sank upon her knees beside my arm-chair, hiding her face against my sleeve, and commenced sobbing as if her heart would break. Having some experience in the natural history of young folks, I continued smoking my pipe without any undue alarm, waiting for the development. When at last the sobbing ceased, I said to her:

"Well, Susy dear, out with it."

She raised her face, now radiant with smiles, and said: "He's been to communion!"

"No!"

"He has, he has, Uncle Bird; this very morning. He was the next one to me. I did not know it till I turned to go to my seat, and what should I see but himself just rising from his knees. I thought I should drop."

"Ah! And what became of your prayers, then?"

"I don't know. I couldn't pray much, but I did feel thankful, and God seemed very near to me."

"This is news indeed."

"What could possess him to keep it a secret from me. I didn't even know he'd been received. The fellow!"

"It's all right, Susy; he had his reasons, no doubt. He has a wise head of his own on young shoulders. You are happy enough now, I think, little bird."

"Oh, dear! oh, dear!"

"It's hard to carry so much happiness inside such little ribs, is it not? Well, well, I'll carry my share of it—God be praised!"

"Amen!"

"And then"——

"Then what?" said Susy.

"What shall I do when Walter takes away my Pet?"

"He shall not. I'll never consent to go."

"I fear, I fear."

"N——never!"

THE END.



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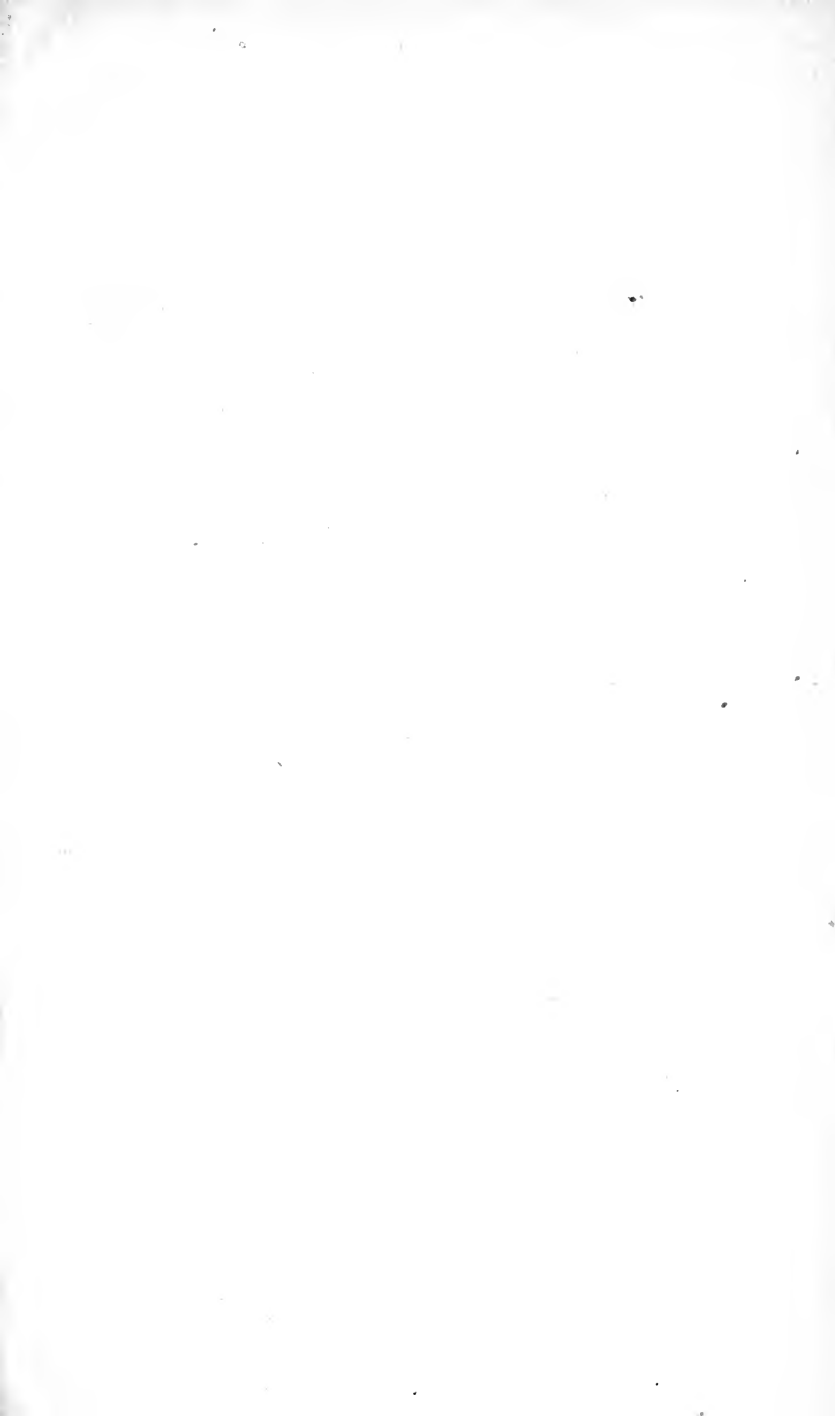
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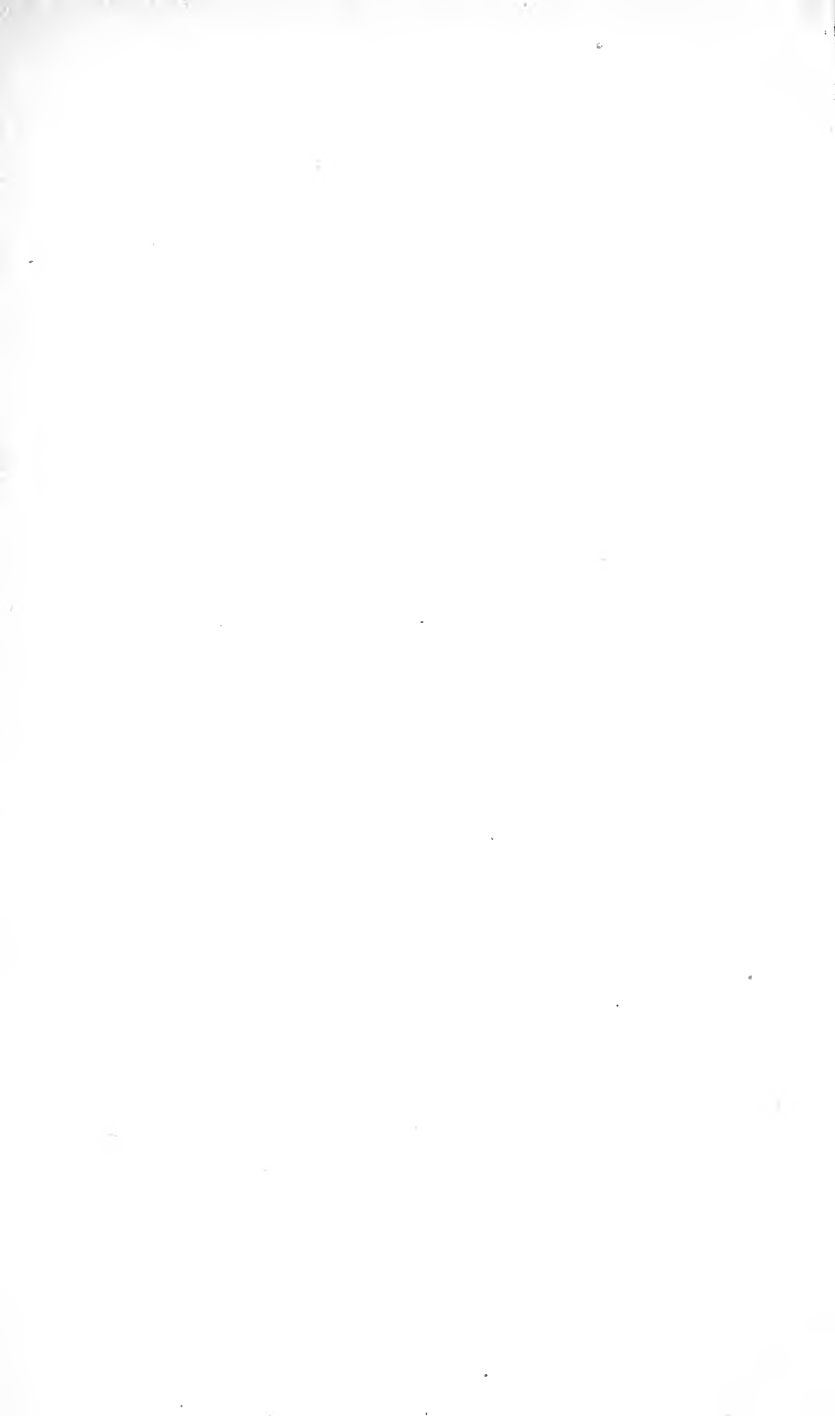
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